

April 30, 2020

Mayor de Blasio
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Speaker Johnson
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio & New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson:

We're glad that the New York City Council has resumed its work online and plans to hold hearings on the city budget that must be finalized by June 30.

We're concerned by the major FY2020 cuts that have already been made to crucial programs and social services. We're also alarmed by cuts in the proposed FY2021 executive budget – while the NYPD's budget seems largely untouched.

In the weeks ahead, we urge you to propose significant reductions to the NYPD's bloated budget, and to push for greater transparency in how the NYPD spends its vast resources. We call on you and your colleagues to use this opportunity to move away from investments in criminalization and policing. We urge you to realign budget priorities with the understanding that safety for all is possible only when there is strong public health infrastructure, housing for all, quality education, environmental justice, food justice, transportation justice, disability justice, protections for workers and all of the additional elements needed for strong citywide infrastructure that guarantees the basic needs of all residents to thrive.

That's why we're writing to you today.

It's time to defund the NYPD's harmful expansion into homeless services, schools, youth services, mental health and other social services where police don't belong. It's time to protect investments in human services, the social safety net, racial and economic justice, and the vision that all New Yorkers deserve to thrive.

Historically, city government has spent far more on police than on public health, homeless services, youth services and other vital agencies. That disturbing disparity has continued under Mayor de Blasio's tenure.

Consider budget allocations from last year: In 2019, the city allocated nearly \$6 billion to the NYPD, compared to \$1.9 billion for the health department; \$2.1 billion for homeless services;

\$1.4 billion on housing, preservation, and development; \$907.3 million on youth and community development; and \$73.8 on workforce development¹.

In other words, New York City is currently spending more on policing than on health, homeless services, youth development, and workforce development combined.

That's wrong and unacceptable. Overinvestment in policing and underinvestment in public health, housing, and community needs helps explain why our city has been so devastated by COVID-19, especially amongst elders and in Black, Latinx and other communities of color.

Social services were stretched thin before this pandemic. After this pandemic, we should be prepared for an even larger portion of NYC residents who will rely on social services and public infrastructure to survive and we need a budget that reflects this. Now more than ever, we must support New York's frontline social services and healthcare workers and shore up the sectors that support these vital services.

We can't police our way out of this pandemic. Eliminating the NYPD's role in social services, ensuring that officers who harm civilians do not continue to remain on payroll for years on end, and reducing the NYPD's overall budget would both save the city significant resources and free up city budget dollars to be re-allocated to agencies that have been starved of resources in recent years.

This is the best approach for the next budget, especially as the city focuses on addressing the immediate aftermath of COVID-19 and ensuring that the hardest-hit communities recover.

The goal should be to make the NYPD smaller, more transparent and less involved in the lives of New Yorkers who need housing, mental health services, youth development, healthcare, and other services. The goal should be to enhance New York City's social safety net and strengthen the City's public infrastructure to enable all New Yorkers to thrive.

Much of the NYPD's close to \$6 billion budget is still unknown to the public, because it isn't itemized by program area. For years, this lack of transparency of the NYPD's budget has been a problem.

You should use your powers as Mayor and Speaker to require that the NYPD publicly release a complete itemized breakdown of its entire budget.

That's the only way to see how much money the NYPD is spending on nonessential and harmful activities. Full disclosure of the NYPD's budget will make it easier to scrutinize and cut the most wasteful and dangerous police expenditures.

¹ <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/erc6-19.pdf>

Defunding the NYPD's illegitimate encroachment into homeless services, schools, youth services, mental health and other areas of city government will protect New Yorkers who need more help, not more policing.

Sincerely,

Communities United for Police Reform (CPR)
1199SEIU Healthcare Workers East
A. Philip Randolph Square Neighborhood Alliance
Alliance for Educational Justice
Alliance for Quality Education
Anthony Baez Memorial Fund
Apogee Journal
Arab American Association of New York
Asian American Federation
Association of Legal Aid Attorneys, UAW Local 2325
Bronx Defenders
Brooklyn Defender Services
Brooklyn Movement Center
Brotherhood/Sister Sol
BYP 100
CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities
Campaign Zero
Center for Community Alternatives
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College
Center for Popular Democracy
Chinese-American Planning Council
Citizen Action of New York
Color Of Change
Community Resource Hub for Safety & Accountability
Community Voices Heard
Creating Law Enforcement Accountability & Responsibility at CUNY
Defending Rights & Dissent
Democratic Socialists of America, NYC Chapter
Desis Rising Up and Moving
Drug Policy Alliance
Equality for Flatbush
Faith in New York
Families for Freedom
FIERCE
Friends of the Harriet Tubman Memorial
Garner Way Foundation
Girls for Gender Equity

Good Old Lower East Side
Harm Reduction Coalition
Human.nyc
Immigrant Defense Project
Jewish Voices for Peace, NYC
Jews for Racial & Economic Justice
Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club
Just Leadership USA
Justice and Beyond
Justice Committee
Justice for Akai Gurley
Kairos Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice at Union Theological Seminary
Katal Center for Health, Equity & Justice
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Legal Action Center
Legal Aid Society
Legal Services Staff Association, UAW/NOLSW 2320
LGBT Faith Leaders of African Descent
Make the Road NY
Malcolm X Grassroots Movement
Mekong NYC
Metropolitan Community Church
Micah Institute
Mijente
MinKwon Center for Community Action
MomsRising
Morningside Heights Resistance
Mpower
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF)
National Domestic Workers Alliance
Neighborhood Defender Services
Neighbors Together
New Kings Democrats
New York City Anti-Violence Project
New York Civil Liberties Union
New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives
New York Council for Housing Development Fund Companies (NYC HDFC)
New York State Harm Reduction Association
New York Taxi Workers Alliance
New York Working Families Party
Nodutdol
North Star Fund
Nurses for Social Justice
Outstanding Returns

Peoples Power Assemblies NYC
Picture the Homeless
Police Reform Organizing Project
Policing and Social Justice Project at Brooklyn College
Public Science Project
Ramarley's Call
Red Hook Initiative
Release Aging People in Prison Campaign
Riders Alliance
Rockaway Youth Task Force
Safety Net Project at the Urban Justice Center
Showing Up for Racial Justice NYC
St. James Presbyterian Church
St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Harlem
Street Vendors Project
Surveillance Technology Oversight Project (STOP)
Take On Hate
Take Root Justice
The Audre Lorde Project
The Center for Anti-Violence Education
The Gathering for Justice/Justice League NYC
The Peace Poets
Transgender Law Center
Trinity Lutheran Church, Sunset Park
Ugnayan Youth for Justice & Social Change
UPROSE
Urban Youth Collaborative
VOCAL
We Dream In Black
WITNESS
Workers Justice Project
Youth Represent

cc: NYC Comptroller Stringer
NYC Public Advocate Williams