

January 11th, 2021

To: New York City Council
Re: Public Safety Hearing Governor Cuomo's Executive Order
Testimony from Kadiata Kaba

Good morning,

My name is Kadiata and I am a member of the Youth Power Project at Make the Road NY (MTRNY). For me, this is personal. I grew up watching people who look like me experience and resist violent actions and abuse at the hands of police. Our city has over-invested in policing instead of investing in things that can actually save our lives and help us thrive -- health care, schools, community centers, housing, mental health supports, food justice.

Amidst the ongoing cases of police violence throughout the country, police reform has been a salient issue. But those of us who reside in these communities directly impacted by policing know that this is our everyday lived experiences.

We are sick. We are tired. We have had enough.

When having conversations about police reform, those who are heavily impacted must sphere head the conversations of policy advocacy efforts. Police Reform must include removing police from public institutions that are supposed to be supporting Black and Latinx youth and communities. We know our history and understand police have been in New York City public schools to criminalize, surveill, and restrict freedoms of Black and Latinx youth.

There is no evidence that police or metal detectors create safer school communities. But there is evidence it further criminalized Black and Latinx youth. Black and Latinx youth are over 90% of all students arrested and receiving summons in schools. Research shows policing students in schools doesn't do anything to make schools safer, but it leads to the pathway to prison.

We have a vision for creating nurturing, supportive, and inclusive schools for all young people. The way to truly create safe and supportive learning environments is by investing in creating strong relationships between students and supportive school staff, teachers, and guidance counselors and using more just and fair approaches to discipline that uses community building practices. NOT POLICING SCHOOL CHILDREN. By redirecting the over \$320,000,000 million we send from the Department of Education to the NYPD for School Safety

Agents we could hire more guidance counselors, social workers, school nurses, and restorative justice coordinators.

The city of Oakland recently announced the complete removal of police officers in schools. **What are you waiting for in New York City?**