

My name is Meropi Peponides. I am a New Yorker, a nonprofit worker, an artist based in Flatbush Brooklyn, and a member of the Justice Committee, a grassroots organization working to end police violence in NYC.

I am deeply disappointed and worried about Mayor Adams' financial plan.

As a remote worker, I rely on public libraries, as one of the few places in the city I can access a quiet space and internet. I was especially disappointed to learn that all local branches in my predominately Black and Latinx neighborhood are being forced to cut hours and other services that provide supportive, and safe places.

When I see Mayor Adams increasing the NYPD's budget by close to \$135M, while libraries, schools and accessible housing have faced 5 rounds of cuts, it tells me that the Adams administrations priority is to criminalize and suppress the needs and voices of Black, Latinx and other low-income communities of color in NYC over providing the support and services that keep New Yorkers healthy, safe, and thriving.

While not a parent, I have several young people in my life who I care about deeply and who attend our public schools. I am worried about them getting the education and opportunities they deserve.

- Nearly 500 school cops leave their jobs each year. A hiring freeze could amount to about \$40 million divested from school policing. This can help prevent more schools cuts and help fund school support staff such as restorative justice coordinators, social workers, counselors, and other evidence-based positions and practices that keep students safe and learning.

I have also watched members of my community struggle with losing their housing as rent in NYC continues to skyrocket and unaffordable fancy developments continue to be built.

Meanwhile, the NYPD buys robot dogs, regularly flies its helicopters and drones over our heads and has unnecessary officers on my block who mostly chat with each other and scrol their phones.

I urge the mayor and city council to stop giving the NYPD preferential treatment and invest in services that serve all new yorkers.