



Advocating for inclusive
communities where
everyone fully belongs

All IN

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To: His Worship John Tory, Mayor, City of Toronto
Toronto City Council Members
cc: Toronto Police Services Board

June 24, 2020

**RE: MOTION TO CUT TORONTO POLICE BUDGET BY 10%
ENDING SYSTEMIC RACISM IN POLICING; ADDRESSING POLICE ABUSE OF POWER
TRANSFORMING POLICING
INVESTING IN MENTAL HEALTH, COMMUNITY PROGRAMS, AND HOUSING**

Mayor Tory and members of City Council,

The killings of [Chantel Moore](#) (June, 2020) [Eishia Hudson](#), [Stewart Andrews](#), [D'Andre Campbell](#), [Jason Collins](#) (all in April of 2020), [Ejaz Choudry](#) and others at the hands of police across Canada this year alone are tragically not new. But with these senseless killings come renewed calls to dramatically reform, to completely transform, and even to dismantle policing, and to end the insidious, systemic, racism that permeates our policing and prison systems. Black and Indigenous advocates and other Torontonians have long been at the forefront of this fight for justice, fairness, and an end to brutal abuse of power. Their voices and calls to action must be heeded.

Many leaders, including our Mayor, have now turned their attentions to these deep injustices. But leadership is not measured by declaring the obvious, "There is systemic racism." It is measured by the pro-active steps that are taken to address and end the wrongs that have existed for so long.

Most people, activists and citizens alike, desire solutions. We want solutions that will end inequality, the harmful and real impacts of poverty, and the criminalization of poverty. We need solutions that will see an end to the discriminatory mistreatment of Indigenous people, Black Canadians, people of colour, and members of the LGTBQ community. We seek solutions that will ensure that no one is policed more, abused more, brutalized more, and punished more, because of their Indigenous ancestry, the colour of their skin, their race, or their identity. We desire solutions that will end police violence.

Torontonians need a city that is inclusive, equitable, empathetic, and where everyone's quality of life (and their very lives) counts. We can achieve this, if only our leadership will have the courage to stand up for what is morally required.

All IN supports the motion to decrease police funding by 10% and applaud the Councillors who have brought it forward and who support it. This cut, however, is a timid first step. More must be done to build safe and prosperous communities and to transform policing.

This minimal cut will be utterly meaningless without further needed action that must be taken by Toronto City Council. We are heartened to see some of those measures included in the motion before City Council. Our elected representatives have an obligation to do more.



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To end police violence and to ensure that vulnerable communities have the support that they need so that *all* children are able to lead safe, healthy, meaningful lives and where their future is mostly in their own hands, we urge Toronto City Council to take the following steps:

- 1) **Support the motion** to decrease police funding by 10% for the upcoming budget;
- 2) **Immediately invest** that money -and make it available- to mental health support and social programming that can be delivered to communities most impacted by police brutality and over-policing;
- 3) **Commit to additional defunding** of police every year in the next 3-5 years, and to investing those funds into much-needed community and social programs;
- 4) Take the appropriate steps to **determine, in meaningful consultation with the impacted communities, what programs and supports** would best serve those communities long-term;
- 5) Demand that the province **amends the *Police Services Act*** to require police services to submit a detailed, **line-by-line, activity-by-activity budget** each year, just as other agencies are required to do, so that police spending can be understood and examined in a meaningful fashion; **Make this detailed budget immediately available to City Council and to the public;**
- 6) Work with community agencies and groups, and the province, to **identify those areas where armed police are not needed or where they have historically caused harm**, commit to removing police from those areas, and determine the most effective, compassionate, and safe ways of delivering the needed services, including services required to keep people safe in high crime areas;
We propose that the following are some of the areas where police have generally been deployed but where the service of armed officers is unnecessary, harmful, and costly:
 - Ticketing or “regulating” homeless persons, often for petty by-law or provincial offences (such as tents and encampments in parks during the pandemic.) This police conduct can only be characterized as harassment of the most vulnerable members of society and a waste of money and resources.
 - Answering/ acting as responders to routine mental health calls;
 - Over-policing and harassment of Indigenous people;
 - Over-policing black and brown neighbourhoods and communities;
 - Stopping and questioning of young black men and racialized people without articulable cause or reasonable and probable grounds for arrest;
 - Many traffic stops and other *Highway Traffic Act* matters, where police officers are not required.
- 7) Make **low-cost and affordable housing in mixed income neighbourhoods a priority**. Without housing we have nothing. Creating safe neighbourhoods requires, first, that all people have safe, decent housing, meaningful and equitable access to education, jobs, and opportunities, and a sense of value and worth. Policing and punishment are *not* what create safe societies. They are the steps we take when all else has failed. But we have continuously put more into policing than in the very foundations of a safe and healthy society. The marginalization of lower-income and destitute people through segregated low-income housing is counter to all notions of equity. **Toronto must revisit**



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how we provide affordable and low-income housing, and move toward mixed-income, integrated housing.

- 8) Completely **re-imagine and transform the notion of policing** and keeping the community safe. Just because policing has long been done through force, arms, and a particular kind of training does not mean that it should continue in the same fashion or that there are not better alternatives. **City Councillors can lead the way by advocating for decriminalization of many drug offences as well as other minor offences.**

We propose that in order to build the safe, inclusive, compassionate, unbiased, and healthy society that we all desire, the very notion of policing must be dramatically transformed. While this undertaking falls to the provincial government, Toronto City Council and the Toronto Police Services Board, and Torontonians have a vital role to play. City Council and TPSB must urge the provincial government to undertake to completely transform the notion of policing. Piecemeal changes will only aggravate existing challenges and injustices. It's time for transformation.

Failure to take strong, decisive, and immediate steps to address the insidious depth of systemic racism and abuse of power within the police force is a failure of our leadership.

We urge City Council to *lead* at this moment. Do not falter.

Sincerely,

Dyanoosh Youssefi
B.A., B.C.L., LL.B.
Founder, Executive Director, All IN

All IN advocates for inclusive communities. We are a collaborative, city-wide group with a vision for communities where everyone belongs and no one is left behind.