



National Partnership for Women & Families

**Testimony for the Record:
Budget Oversight Hearing on the Metropolitan Police Department**

District of Columbia Council's Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety

June 15, 2020

Chairperson Allen and Members of the Committee,

The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization based here in Washington, D.C. For more than four decades, we have fought for every major national policy that has helped women and families. We have expertise in both federal and state policy development, including helping to craft the Universal Paid Leave Amendment Act.

Today we are writing to express solidarity with community-based organizations led by Black residents of D.C. and to express our opposition to the current budget of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). The proposed increase in funding for MPD, coupled with the decrease in funding for much-needed community based programs, is completely unacceptable.

We believe that the increase to MPD's budget will not keep us safe, and will in fact make us less safe. MPD has inflicted significant harm on D.C. residents, particularly Black and Brown residents. Despite being illegal, stop-and-frisk is still routinely practiced; MPD officers have harassed, assaulted and abused children; and in 2018, MPD officers killed three Black men, D'Quan Young, Marquese Alston, and Jeff Price, over a 5-week span with no consequences and without any information being released to the public about who these officers were. And during the current COVID-19 pandemic, MPD officers have flouted public health standards and routinely refused to wear PPE.

Furthermore, while the MPD's budget has consistently increased, violence has continued to rise. Homicides have increased every year, despite increased funding for more officers on the streets. D.C. currently has more officers per capita than nearly anywhere else in the country.

Instead of increasing funding to an institution that perpetuates racist harm and violence, we request instead that the funding for MPD be reallocated to programs that have proven effective at reducing violence and increasing economic opportunities for D.C. residents.



We request that the MPD's budget be reallocated to increase funding to:

- The Office of Neighborhood and Safety Engagement and violence interrupter programs, including the Cure the Streets program;
- The Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants;
- The Roving Leaders program;
- Medical and mental health professionals and social workers to respond to emergency calls;
- Services for formerly incarcerated DC residents including housing, education, and job assistance;
- Services for incarcerated pregnant women;
- A permanent budget item for public housing repairs;
- Programs to end chronic homelessness, including for Permanent Supportive Housing and homeless street outreach;
- The availability of high-quality child care;
- Vital nutrition and food access programs;
- Suspending rent and mortgage payments in DC until the COVID-19 crisis is over; and
- COVID-19 relief funding to all DC residents, including undocumented residents.

In addition, we request that funding for school resource officers be reallocated to pay for mental health care and trauma-informed services in DC public schools, along with technological support for remote learning.

Just one third of the current MPD budget could fund many of the above programs for years. Budgets are moral documents that show our values, and we urge the D.C. Council to prioritize funding programs that truly protect and support residents.

Thank you for your time and for accepting this submission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Ness", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Debra L. Ness
President
National Partnership for Women & Families