

#REFUNDRALEIGH

DEFUND THE POLICE. REFUND OUR CITY.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:





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THE INTRO

Ever thought about how “government money” is actually just OUR dollars? We the people should decide what happens with OUR money!

Mayor Mary-Ann Baldwin and the Raleigh City Council think they have done enough by saying they’ll enact three policies from the #8cantwait campaign and allowing artists to draw on Fayetteville Street, but they haven’t done nearly enough to repair the harm and violence inflicted on our communities for much longer than these last few weeks. Those three policies do not fundamentally change the relationship the Raleigh Police Department has to the communities it harms the most. We are demanding a complete shift of power from police and punishment to people and care.

That starts with defunding and demilitarizing the police, and investing in care not cops! **Defunding** means divesting funds from police departments and reallocating them to non-policing forms of public safety and community support. **Demilitarization** is an effort to end the use of military weaponry by local police forces. Together, defunding and demilitarization create a pathway to **abolition**: a political vision with the goal of eliminating systems that reinforce inequalities via punishment, violence and control and creating lasting, community led supportive alternatives.

We deserve clean water to drink, cook with, and clean ourselves with. We deserve housing with a strong foundation, air that keeps us cool in the summer, and heat that warms our feet throughout the winter. Our children deserve sidewalks that are safe and sturdy to stand on while they wait for their school buses. Those that are houseless deserve housing and resources because none of us are disposable. Those of us battling mental health issues, seen and unseen, deserve space and resources to stabilize our lives to put us in positions to thrive. We deserve to have our families kept together instead of ripped apart due to policing, mass incarceration, and deportation. We deserve more than to merely improve the war the police have waged on our communities. We deserve to feel safe in our communities, not surveilled, intimidated, brutalized, and murdered by the Raleigh Police Department.

We demand the immediate re-funding of Raleigh. We demand a reallocation of those city funds to ensure our collective survival, sustainment, and safety. And we demand community-led accountability of the policing system until RPD is defunded.

WHO WE ARE:

We are a collective of young people in Raleigh who are 1) organizing to end state violence 2) imagining safety beyond cops & prisons 3) demanding Raleigh defund the police & refund our city!

WHAT WE KNOW:

Raleigh City Council passed a budget that increases police funding to **\$111 million**. As a North Carolina community, we know that police have never carried out their duty to keep everyone safe, even when they are over-resourced and well funded. In fact, they bring more violence and fear to our communities by arresting, beating, and ultimately murdering us.

WHAT WE'RE DEMANDING:

1) Defund and Demilitarize the Raleigh Police Department, 2) Invest in Care, not Cops, and 3) Community-led Accountability As Outlined in the Raleigh PACT Proposal (In the Transition Period Between Our Current Policing System & Full Defunding of RPD)

DEMAND #1

DEFUND AND DEMILITARIZE THE RALEIGH POLICE DEPARTMENT

Defund. We demand that The City Council defund RPD by 75% of their increased budget of \$111 million and reallocate those funds of \$83 million to the communities Raleigh has failed. (see Invest in Care, Not Cops)

- In the recently approved [2021 budget](#), the Raleigh City County allocated \$111 million to the Raleigh Police Department. The budget for the police department has been steadily increasing year after year. Since 2010, there has been a [\\$21 million increase](#) devoted to the police.

Demilitarize. We demand the removal of all military grade weapons from Raleigh Police Department and that city council enact a policy that prevents the Raleigh Police Department from receiving military grade weapons and accepting money for the specific use of purchasing military grade weapons.

- The City of Raleigh and Wake County have a history of receiving federal money and spending its own taxpayer dollars to further militarize its police departments. A recent investigation done by [ABC11](#) reported the Wake County Sheriff Department acquired military equipment - including a mine resistant vehicle - worth \$661,200 in 2017 through the federal 1033 Program. More outrageously, the Wake County Sheriff's Office has [spent \\$559,267](#) on riot control gas, stun guns, safe smoke, and ballistic shields. Additionally, a 2014 [ACLU report](#) shows the Raleigh Police Department received \$120,000 from the Department of Homeland Security through a federal grant program in 2011.

We demand Raleigh City Council and Raleigh Police Department end the occupation in Southeast Raleigh by removing the over-concentration of police substations and repurpose them as community resource centers. (see Invest in Care, Not Cops)

We demand the removal of police from schools, including School Resource Officers (SRO).

- **Raleigh** has long been **central** to the struggle against the School-to-Prison-Pipeline and removing SROs from schools. We stand with the Raleigh and Triangle-based groups Education Justice Alliance and the Southern Coalition for Social Justice who are **pushing to remove SROs from schools.**

DEMAND # 2

INVEST IN CARE, NOT COPS!

We demand that Raleigh defund and divest in the RPD who actively endanger us and instead fund community-led health, safety strategies, and social programs that actually keep us safe.

- **Free drug and alcohol rehabilitation treatment programs:** It's widely understood that prison and punishment "**does little to reduce** the cluster of issues which will see [those experiencing addiction] cycle in and out of the nation's corrections system." The aforementioned policy proposal delineates the several ways that people experiencing addiction need comprehensive support, not punishment: "Instead, **treatment must be defined more broadly** to cover the full continuum of care, including vital prevention programs: basic literacy training, job skill development, life skills training, mental health assessment and treatment, and possibly help with basic needs like arranging short-term child care and transportation."
- **Free mental health services including but not limited to:** individual and family therapists, psychiatrists, crisis intervention specialists with no affiliation to police or law enforcement.
- **Provide Safe Housing for EVERYONE:** According to the **Raleigh Rescue Mission**, 6,000 residents (Raleigh + Wake County) are currently experiencing homelessness and 100,000 residents (Raleigh + Wake County) are impoverished and at risk of becoming homeless. The number is most likely higher given the economic impacts of COVID-19. As of now, **only \$5,625,774 has been proposed to be allocated towards housing and neighborhoods.**

- **Institute a Raleigh, city-wide minimum wage:** to [\\$20+/hour](#) which will allow our community members to do more than just survive. We all deserve the chance to thrive. We know that a lot of “crime” happens because people are trying to do what they can to survive in a system that traps them into jobs with poverty wages, limited-to-no healthcare, and severe lack of resources to support themselves and their family. According to a [2016 White House Report](#), “Higher wages for low-skilled workers reduce both property and violent crime, as well as crime among adolescents.” Ensuring that people earn dignified wages targets one of the roots of poverty cycles that force people into so-called “crime” in the first place.
- **Free, quality universal childcare:** Caring for our children is foundational to creating safe communities. Families should not have to choose between paying for rent or getting childcare. According to [WRAL](#), “Families are spending more than a third of their income on childcare – that’s three times more than the amount recommended by the Department of Health and Human Services.” Furthermore, [30% of childcare centers and homes](#) have closed since the beginning of Covid-19 leaving our most vulnerable populations unable to provide safe child care.
- **Ensure free, and more extensive, public transport, especially servicing marginalized and lower-income communities.**
- **Install safe and sanitary gender-inclusive public restrooms.**
- **Ensure investment in community-based food banks, grocery cooperatives, gardens, and farms:** Southeast Raleigh’s access to healthy and quality food has long depended on the profit margins of corporations like [Kroger](#) and [Save-A-Lot](#), which has resulted in both companies abandoning the Southeast Raleigh community and deepening its egregious [Food Deserts](#). We need investment into community-based co-ops like [Fertile Ground](#), a community-led grocery co-op that doesn’t depend on profits for billionaires and instead is owned by the community.
- **Invest in youth programs that promote learning, critical thinking, safety, and community care.**

DEMAND #3

COMMUNITY-LED ACCOUNTABILITY AS OUTLINED IN THE RALEIGH PACT PROPOSAL

We demand that there be instituted an independent and representative civilian oversight board to review policing breaches with the four following powers:

- **Subpoena power:** The board can compel testimony and request documents from local law enforcement. The ability to issue subpoenas is crucial to the efficacy of this oversight board, as these boards are only effective when given independence, resources, legitimacy, and [power](#).
- **Investigatory power:** The board can conduct full investigations independent of whatever internal process the police department already has in place. This power requires adequate funding.
- **Disciplinary power:** The board can determine disciplinary decisions that, barring a “clear error” in the board’s investigation, must be carried out by the police chief.
- **Personnel file access:** The board can access officers’ personnel files.

We demand accountability budget allocations are external to the police department. We demand that no extra funding be put towards performative accountability measures housed within the police department or staffed by current or former law enforcement.

- Our road to a City that puts care and people first must include putting major government infrastructure under direct community control. This includes current and future public safety infrastructure. Accountability mechanisms must be resourced and they must be independent.

We demand that Mayor Baldwin and the City Council commit to exploring the City and State’s legal avenues for granting the board these powers, including issuing a recommendation that the General Assembly pass a local acts bill authorizing these powers before the legislature ends session on June 30th.

WHY NOT OTHER REFORMS?

HOW WOULD DEFUNDING AND REALLOCATING MAKE RALEIGH SAFER?

- **Policing does not address the root causes of our unequal society, but ultimately reinforces them:** Community members cannot live safe and dignified lives without quality jobs, housing, food, and education. Investing and strengthening the police is a way to criminalize and punish those who are victims of the racist, capitalist and patriarchal system that governs our communities. Defunding and reallocating funds is a way of dismantling an institution that protects and maintains a system rooted in dispossession and enslavement.
- **It is a myth that increasing policing significantly lowers crime rates:** [Many experts](#) have concluded there is no evidence to suggest that higher rates of policing lower crime rates. The “Government Accountability Office concluded that while there was a 26 percent decline in overall crime from 1993 to 2000, only 1.3 percent of the decline could be attributed to additional police officers.

- **Our reality calls us to move beyond demanding for implicit bias training for police:** While [countless studies](#) reveal that implicit bias is rampant in police departments and implicit bias determines [which communities are over-policed and victimized by police](#), there is little to no evidence that implicit bias training and community relations initiatives actually help. [Many of these reforms had been implemented in Minneapolis](#) with little to no success at preventing racist violence at the hands of police.
- **Reforms still advocate for more policing:** Reforms such as “[community policing](#)” and use of body cams have not been able to prevent stop-and-frisk, police abuse, surveillance, and the criminalization of Black and other working-class communities of color. *After all, the creation of prisons, mass incarceration, and police militarization were direct results of reforms.*
- **Militarization of police departments prepares police for warfare against the community, treating Black and Brown communities as a threat to national security:** Policing has only succeeded in containing, controlling, and punishing Black and other working-class communities of color. Furthermore, [ICE agents can also act as police to further terrorize undocumented communities](#). They have been caught self-identifying as “police” in arrest videos obtained by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and in photographs where the word is emblazoned on their jackets. We must acknowledge how the militarization of the police in this country mirrors the destructive U.S military policies rooted in colonialism and imperialism abroad that have caused anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiments.
- **We do not seek reforms that “diversify” the police force with more Black and officers of color:** Policing is [systematically rooted](#) in violence against Black communities, not the actions of a “few bad cops.” The only way to prevent police violence and finally keep Black communities safe is through defunding the police.
- **We know that in the history of this country, assigning “criminality” has always been crucial to racist and anti-Black narratives to justify brutalizing, imprisoning, and killing Black people:** In fact, police themselves were invented as a “[method of control to enforce and protect a key economic foundation in the development of American \(and global\) capitalism: slavery.](#)” In Southern States specifically – like North Carolina – police originally [emerged as slave patrols](#). Therefore, the notion of crime and Black criminality is entirely seeped in white supremacist legacies and anti-Black stories. Not only do we know that stories about crime and police are about stoking racist fear, but we also know that when we invest in our communities instead, “crime” decreases.

In order to effectively “fight crime” we must reject the idea that police keep our communities safe. Our community benefits from more jobs, educational opportunities, community centers and general and mental health resources.

- **Receiving federal money for military equipment only strengthens and enables the Raleigh Police Department to use excessive force on civilians:** As shown throughout the recent protests, tear gas, rubber bullets, and other tactical equipment were used to hurt peaceful protestors and discourage collective actions against injustices. Crime does not drive an increase in police force capacity; [spending does](#).

WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE ARE IN CRISIS OR IN DANGER? WHAT HAPPENS THEN? THESE ARE GOOD QUESTIONS, TOO.

- Like many abolitionists, our first answer to this question is to consider how the current system of police, prisons, and punishment does not work to keep us safe in the first place. Therefore, we’ve never been able to rely on them to really answer the call to keep us safe from crisis or danger. Let’s do the work of imagining true safety together.
- **Police don’t spend most of their time fighting ‘crime’ and ‘putting away the bad guys’ the way we have been told they do. In fact, they’re really bad at it:** As abolitionist Mariame Kamba explains: they “[spend most of their time responding to noise complaints, issuing parking and traffic citations, and dealing with other noncriminal issues](#).” According to a [review of 10 major city police departments done by the New York Times](#), “serious violent crimes made up around 1 percent of all calls for services.” Another [report](#) shows that of the 10.6 million arrests made by police yearly, only 5% are for violent offenses – and the arrests for non-violent and low-level offenses are disproportionately of Black and Brown people.
- **What about violent crime?** We know that only around [40% of crime victims](#) report to the police what they experienced, and only about 25% percent of those reported crimes are “cleared by arrests.” The rates for ‘solving’ murders is similarly dismal. Nationally, [only about 60 percent of murder cases](#) are cleared, and that [rate drops to 45% when it’s gun-involved homicide](#).
- **What about rape and sexual violence?** We know the current system of police, punishment, and prisons has done very little to curb sexual violence and rape culture. [Less than 25%](#) of sexual violence cases get reported to the police in the first place. While we know there are many reasons survivors don’t report their experiences of sexual violence, [13% cite fear “that the police could not or would not do anything to help.”](#)

Survivors' distrust that the criminal punishment system will do little to keep those who harmed them away is not unfounded: around 2% of sexual assault cases get a felony conviction. To add insult to injury, police themselves are found to commit sexual assault and domestic violence at alarming rates – [around 40% of officers have intimate partner violence in their households, compared to the 10% of the public](#). Police officers have also been found to commit [troubling rates](#) of sexual misconduct on the job. Ultimately, police and punishment do little to stop sexual violence, and have instead been known to commit egregious forms of sexual violence.

MANY CREATIVE AND SAFETY-SEEKING COMMUNITY PROJECTS HAVE CREATED SAFETY MECHANISMS THAT PROVIDE ACCOUNTABILITY, DIGNITY, JUSTICE TO THE HARMED AND THE HARMER.

- We simply need to legitimize and strengthen these kinds of projects with the same kind of resources (money and study!) that we've put into the irreparable criminal punishment system. Here are examples of a few projects:
- The [Oakland Power Projects](#) “The Oakland Power Projects (OPP) builds the capacity for Oakland residents to reject police and policing as the default response to harm and to highlight or create alternatives that actually work by identifying current harms, amplifying existing resources, and developing new practices that do not rely on policing solutions.” By training their community members with 3 different workshops that capacitate trainees with knowledge around dealing with mental health crises, response practices to acute emergencies, and more.
- The [Audre Lorde Project's Safe Outside the System](#) (New York City) trains members on violence prevention and de-escalation in order to normalize community-led safety. Here is a [link to a video](#) explaining the development of their project.
- [SpiritHouse NC](#) in Durham has worked for decades to reduce the impact of police violence and the violence of prisons on Black people in Durham. They have developed [The Harm Free Zone Transformative Justice Training](#), which capacitates Durham community members to hold themselves accountable when harm is done without involving the police. In the training, participants “develop tools and strategies that strengthen our individual and collective capacities to confront and transform harm.”

Thank
You



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***"Let's work together to build a new Raleigh that works in
the best interest of the people, not a select few!"***