

From: [Fikes, Cathy](#)
To: [Agenda Alerts](#)
Subject: FW: Strengthen Our Community, Divest from Police
Date: Saturday, June 13, 2020 2:30:49 PM

From: Carlos Parache <carlosparache10@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, June 12, 2020 9:15 PM

To: Fikes, Cathy <CFikes@surfcity-hb.org>; Carr, Kim <Kim.Carr@surfcity-hb.org>; Semeta, Lyn <Lyn.Semeta@surfcity-hb.org>; Brenden, Patrick <Patrick.Brenden@surfcity-hb.org>; Delgleize, Barbara <Barbara.Delgleize@surfcity-hb.org>; Peterson, Erik <Erik.Peterson@surfcity-hb.org>; Hardy, Jill <Jill.Hardy@surfcity-hb.org>; Posey, Mike <Mike.Posey@surfcity-hb.org>

Subject: Strengthen Our Community, Divest from Police

To my government representatives,

My name is Carlos Lopez and I am a resident of Huntington Beach near Adam and Magnolia. A graduate from Cal State Fullerton and employee of a small business in Costa Mesa. I am heartbroken to see my city become the center of national attention for such disgraceful reasons, but believe it is far beyond time for city leadership to acknowledge the long and powerful history of white supremacy in Huntington Beach, and the need for city leadership to unequivocally condemn supremacy in all its forms, including within the Huntington Beach Police Department. It has become more than clear that a radical shift in our concept of policing and community health must take place at the local level. It is unacceptable that black and marginalized communities are living in persistent fear of being killed by state authorities like police, immigration agents or even white vigilantes who are emboldened by state actors. **We call for divestment from the police and for those dollars to be rerouted to strengthen our community's services.**

Huntington Beach leadership has consistently claimed that the city has departed from its past as a haven for white supremacy. Unfortunately, that statement is violently dismissive of the lived experience of people of color in this community. With only 1.1% of Huntington Beach is black, I struggle to see how former Huntington Beach Mayor Mike Posey saw "Huntington Beach [as a] blended, diverse culture where everyone is

welcome" in 2018, just after the 2018 rally at Bolsa Chica State Beach that was attended by multiple white supremacy groups including the Rise Above Movement, to the deafening silence of Huntington Beach leadership. The Huntington Beach Police Department has a history of violence towards minority communities, upholding anti-immigrant, anti-unhoused people, and anti-black policies. City leadership seems to forget that just 26 years ago Huntington Beach saw the brutal murder of Vernon Windell Flournoy in our own community. Every member of the city council was alive during this incident. Racism is not part of Huntington Beach's past. It is a lived reality for the black and latin residents of this city every day that is conveniently forgotten by our all-white city council. I know, I have seen it and felt it. It is time to not only acknowledge the way racism impacts our community, but to take active steps to reform city policy to protect black and hispanic residents.

The problematic nature of the HBPD was exemplified in the viral comparisons of their response to the anti-corona lockdown protests and the recent Black Lives Matter protest. Declaring the BLM protest an unlawful assembly was a violation of HB residents' first amendment rights. Scenes like these being shared across the internet reflect poorly on our city and demonstrate the way our police department stands complicit in systemic violence against black and brown people. We have a chance to boost our city's reputation while making our community a better place to live by reallocating funds away from the police.

Despite continued profiling, harassment, terror and killing of Black communities, local and federal decision-makers continue to invest in the police, which leaves Black people vulnerable and our communities no safer. Moreover, this deep lack of trust that the government is breeding by terrorizing its own people, rather than safeguarding our health, is an alarming risk for future generations to live peacefully and safely with each other. Youth in our city are quickly becoming disillusioned from our local government with our representatives' failure to address systemic issues of inequality and lack of social

services. Residents across the city feel anxiety due to the ongoing Covid-19 crisis and subsequent economic downturn. You as city leaders need to address these growing concerns amongst your citizens.

The time has come to defund the police. This experiment of excessive policing encourage across our country has proven to be a failure. We must prioritize spending funds elsewhere more useful.

The proposed Huntington Beach budget for 2020/2021 allocated 22.9% of funds to the police, while only 4.4% of funds are set to be allocated towards community services. Rather, we need a radical increase for funding towards community services and healthcare. We need youth programs, increased mental health services, neighborhood infrastructures, childcare, and community outreach for those who need these services most. We need to address our city's rapidly growing homelessness crisis. We need to improve our local parks and beaches. We need more funds for rehabilitation and the re-entry process for formerly incarcerated individuals, and help increase employment and education rates. We need to build a society that does not respond unilaterally to social challenges through police intimidation. **Money cut from police budgets can be reinvested in services that can tangible improve HB residents' lives.**

We are not asking for your empty words, we want accountability. We do not want a single tax dollar going to fund white supremacy in our community, to fund violence against our residents, or to result in the eventual death of a member of the community at the hands of the HBPD.

We join in solidarity with the freedom fighters in Minneapolis, Louisville, and across the United States. And we call for the end to police terror.

Sincerely,
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