

Hello,

If it is true that the Ottawa City Council does not have control over the Ottawa Police budget, then there is no way that police funding can be responsive to the needs of the community. For this reason, I strongly support the motion by council members McKenny and Menard (Re: Changes to Policing and Police Budget Process in Ottawa) to bring OP funding under control of the city council, and I urge you to do the same.

You have heard the calls across the continent to defund the police. These calls are ringing here in Ottawa. We do not want armed police officers responding to calls that are better handled by other services. We want you to defund the police and redistribute these funds to alternative models of community safety that do not rely on police forces.

Abdi Abdirahman was murdered by an OPS officer in 2016, essentially because someone made a nuance call. We need change. There is no reason to send violent enforcers to de-escalate situations that so many people can do without violence. When we send police forces into mental health crises, disputes, traffic violations, drug offenses, and so many other situations, people get hurt, imprisoned or killed. The murder of Abdi Abdirahman was an act of racist violence. Police forces cannot be reformed. We need to shrink their power. They must be defunded.

Whether or not you agree with me that the only way forward is to defund the police, you must agree that OPS budgets should be decided by the city, and not be the OPSB alone. The OPS and all city services must be responsive to the needs of the community.

I urge you to support the motion made by council members McKenny and Menard. I also urge you to take seriously the call to defund the police. This is happening here in Ottawa. We expect you to defund, dismantle and redistribute funds that have previously been earmarked to OPS and instead focus on non-violent, non-armed and non-punitive services to support the health and well being of our community.

Best,

Madeleine B.