

COMMUNICATION: *Email dated November 22, 2021 from Anonymous sender*

**Sent:** November 22, 2021 12:25 PM

**Subject:** OPS Budget freeze - written statement

Good evening,

I'm writing today to express the importance of a budget freeze. It's imperative that we truly prioritize aiding folks who have experienced gender based violence, mental health crises, and discrimination or racism with out the use of policing strategies.

The police can and do respond to crime with violence as we have seen over the past 20+ years. The priorities that the OPS has outlined this year are all very complex issues. Folks need resources in their neighbourhoods to be able to combat these complex issues in a safe environment, removed from any power dynamics and threat of incarceration. Do we really think that people who need help also want to deal with the constant threat of police intervention? Absolutely not.

As someone who experiences mental illness, I can understand the vulnerability that folks feel when they ask for help. This is why neutral resources without police provide a safe space for any and everyone. We want the police to be completely removed from these resources to increase feelings of safety.

"Crime reduction" is a term often used when folks talk about safety. However, we can't accurately monitor crimes that we aren't seeing. Is crime reduced when there is added surveillance? Or are people better at hiding their crimes under surveillance? Surveillance creates an imbalanced power dynamic because everyone can be seen as a suspect. Me, an innocent person, will get panicked and intimidated by people in uniform watching me with access to weapons of violence like guns and tasers. I think it's quite obvious that people can commit crimes after an officer drives by so if a survey says that police surveillance reduces crime, I can logically infer that it means people are more careful about where and when they're doing illegal things. It makes more sense to deter people from committing crimes by creating safe spaces for people who are still able to deviate from a life of incarceration, violence, addiction, etc. We must be able to provide spaces for people to unlearn unhealthy habits which can lead to crime.

Lastly, bloated salaries aren't keeping Ottawa citizens safe. I believe money is managed inappropriately within the OPS in order to line certain members' pockets.

Safety isn't a commodity. We can only set up parameters to ensure people get the help they need. People don't just decide to be "criminals", many offenders are put through a variety of different life events that all culminate in acting against the law. Often "criminals" are survivors, victims of abuse, and victims of a system that fails their humanity. They may have trauma inflicted by police. This is why I want to see less police in my city and see more community intervention.

Thank you for your attention.