From:	E A
To:	Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject:	It"s time -
Date:	Tuesday, June 23, 2020 9:43:23 PM

- to defund the police.

Hi Missoula City Councilers,

I'm Erin and I live in Missoula. I am writing to demand that the Missoula City Council adopts a budget that prioritizes community well-being and redirects funding away from the police (or fully abolishes the police and redirects all of those funds to community services benefitting underserved and BIPOC communities).

In searching the City of Missoula website, I have yet to find a published 2020 budget (there's no link to the "book" or final adopted budget available here), though I have reviewed the Department Request Forms for Fiscal Year 2020 submitted by/for the Police Department.

Many Montanans may be tempted to think the unique nature of such a vast, yet sparsely-populated state minimizes the likelihood of police brutality in our communities. However, as reported by the Billings Gazette last year, **Montana ranked ninth in killings by police per capita**, despite being one of the least populated states in the entire country (41 of 50). **Wow.**

In 2017, the Great Falls Tribune reported Montana police killings reached a total higher than the previous six years. These figures are alarming, but don't tell the full story. Under Montana Code § 2-6-102 and Article II, Section 10 of the Montana Constitution, police disciplinary records are exempt from disclosure if there is an "individual privacy interest that clearly exceeds the merits of public disclosure." Montana police forces operate within a culture of impunity, and as the members of the communities they are supposed to be protecting, we can't even begin to grasp the scope of their violence.

Our country is in the midst of widespread revolution over the systemic, racist, transphobic violence of policing. Empty gestures and suggestions of "reform" are inadequate and unacceptable. I am demanding that real change be made to the way Missoula allocates its resources.

Missoula prides itself on being a community. A community that supports local businesses and local resources. **We take care of our own. But the way we do this is <u>not</u> through the police.** We do this by investing in community resources that actually serve community needs -- like affordable housing, mental and public health care services -- implementing a living wage, increasing funding for schools. We do this by defunding the police and reallocating that money. (Ultimately, we do this by abolishing the police.)

I am demanding that the City Council meaningfully defund the Missoula Police Department. I join the calls of those across the country to defund the police. I am demanding a budget that adequately and effectively meets the needs of at-risk Missoula residents during this trying and uncertain time. I am demanding a budget that supports community wellbeing, rather than empowering the police forces that tear them apart.

As the City Council, the budget proposal is in your hands. It is your duty to represent your

constituents. I am urging you to completely revise the budget for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, and to fund the social programs proven to be more effective than policing at promoting community safety and equity. Have the courage to be a leader of the change this city, state, and country desperately needs.

Thank you for your time -- but ultimately, for your action.

Erin

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