From:	Courtney VonLindern
To:	Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject:	Response to L.E.A.R.N. Missoula
Date:	Wednesday, July 1, 2020 10:57:23 AM

Council Members of Missoula:

I have been made aware of the Missoula City Council's Ad Hoc Committee on Public Safety and Systemic racism that is gathering today to discuss the L.E.A.R.N Missoula Project. It is my understanding that this project will be headed by Spider McKnight, Six Pony Hitch's founder.

While I believe that this project is well-intentioned, the impact will be continued harm to our BIPOC community members and neighbors. Suggesting that Missoula needs to invest in the research of systemic racism, oppression, and marginalization in our community wholly ignores the reality that our BIPOC neighbors face every day. To add, we also have the evidence as proved by the stories of BIPOC individuals living and studying in our communities. Systemic racism exits in Missoula, and funding research for this will take away from any effort to put money into organizations, resources, and solutions that are available NOW.

I implore you to educate yourself on the reality of Systemic Racism. A great place to start is "How To Be An Antiracist" by Ibram X. Kendi, as well as the Great UnLearn provided by Rachel Cargle. For a more local approach, Tobin Shearer at the University of Montana is offering a course available to the Missoula Community for $75. The funds go directly back to the program and the MTREP (if my memory serves me correctly), while educating community members on systemic racism. It is your responsibility to do this work, as it is ALL our responsibilities.

By now, the message should be clear: citizens of this community and nation are calling for the divestment and redistribution of police funding to community services that actively protect and provide for true public safety. The calls to action are clear and specific. If you're still confused on this, I demand for you to again to do a better job of listening to those in your community. (Frankly, I'm getting tired of sending these emails, but they're not going away until you step up and do better. We ALL must do better).

Lastly, I suggest that you continue to hold intentional public forums that provide a safe place for BIPOC voices to be heard to invest funding into actionable items that are already being begged of you.

Again, the intention of your project is good-natured; however, the impact is harmful and tonedeaf. Do better.

Thank you for your time.

Courtney VonLindern
(they/them)