

"Defunding the police" is an increasingly popular slogan which supports reallocating already-available funds to other non-policing services and public safety, including youth services, public health, housing, education, and other community services. This type of service program seeks to bolster community security by reducing the number of police officers required to work in defunded areas. In addition to reducing the number of police officers, this type of service program also seeks to reduce overall government spending by cutting the budgets of the police, which they feel do not directly benefit citizens. It is hoped that this will create more funds and decrease negative police/citizen interactions.

Without proper funding, police officers would be ill-equipped to handle a wide range of potentially dangerous situations. This would give rise to more citizen complaints. **There is no valid reason to cut funding to police departments.** Police officers help make our communities safer by serving with greater precision than ever before. The idea that somehow reducing their resources will increase their effectiveness is simply illogical.

One way to ensure that police officers are well-trained is to provide them with an excellent training program. To provide the community with outstanding officers, we must provide the training they need, and one way is to fully fund the police academy. Police must have access to the latest tools and equipment, including high-tech computer software. Many departments are unable to afford this training. Therefore, we should investigate ways to fund community-based police training courses that can supplement the existing training programs.

The second most common reason for choosing to fund the police is to enhance the quality of law enforcement around the country. In theory, all law enforcement officers, including those who serve in the specialty teams, such as Crisis Negotiations, Dive Teams and tactical response should be proficient and professional.

Many cities across the country have also looked at their police budgets and eliminated many police officer positions. This has led to many agencies doing more work with less officers, which becomes an officer safety issue. But maybe even more important is citizen safety. **Some of the cities who have started to defund their police departments including Minneapolis, New York City and Portland saw violent crime rates rise in 2020.** Minneapolis, for example, saw homicides increase by 49% between July and March compared to the year prior,

and Portland saw homicides spike 270.6% from July through February of the same year.

Equipment is a major concern for the police and public alike. Many people do not see the need for police departments to have military style equipment. **Police officers and other public servants are in very high-risk situations daily.** The nature of their work means that they deal with dangerous criminals, situations, and substances. These things need to be addressed with protective gear, vehicles for different situations, and medical supplies that are effective. These tools can be expensive. Equipment like these can protect the public and officers from property damage, serious injury and even death.

The idea that defunding the police is a safe and needed plan, is untrue and is dangerous. **It costs lives every single day when police are called to duty without proper equipment, adequate staffing, and reliable equipment.** It costs lives in car crashes, violent crimes, and even the senseless deaths that are inflicted on innocent victims on the nation's streets by drunk drivers. **We believe that police officers deserve better pay, better benefits, and adequate compensation** when they are put in these dangerous and demanding positions. Sadly, that does not seem to be an issue in some jurisdictions.

The police budget is something that impacts every citizen in the community. We as citizens must do everything that we can to voice our opinions, and **demand that our representatives find ways to adequately fund our police department.** Citizens need to be educated in why departments have and use specific equipment. Helping our communities get a better understanding of department policies and needs would help in stopping this alarming trend of defunding.

We all agree that strengthening the ties between law enforcement and the communities they serve is important to everyone. However, there is one element that impacts every aspect of police work and that needs our support. **Police officers depend on our help to make sure that they are well-equipped to handle any dangerous situations they may find themselves in.** We need to make sure that police officers remain an integral part of American life.