



Can the Minneapolis City Council REALLY Disband the Police?

On Friday, the Minneapolis City Council caved to pressure from Black Lives Matter and extremist Democrats and voted unanimously to approve a pledge to dismantle the city's police department and replace it with a yet-to-be-defined "community-led public safety system." But largely missing from the fanfare over the vote is the fact that disbanding the police department is in contravention of the city's charter, which the city council can change only with the approval of the mayor.



The city council vote came just 18 days after George Floyd died in police custody. Video showed one officer — Derek Chauvin — with his knee on Floyd's neck for more than eight minutes.

Chauvin has since been arrested and charged with second-degree murder as a result of Floyd's death. But that's not good enough for the left-wing protesters and rioters who demand nothing less than the complete dismantling of the city's police force. The City Council's meeting can be heard [here](#).

Five members of the council — Andrea Jenkins, Steve Fletcher, Linea Palmisano, Alondra Cano and Phillippe Cunningham — joined Council President Lisa Bender in presenting the measure. The measure passed 12-0 on a voice vote.

"The murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, by Minneapolis Police officers is a tragedy that shows no amount of reforms will prevent lethal violence and abuse by some members of the Police Department against members of our community, especially Black people and people of color," the resolution stated.

Mayor Jacob Frey, who previously stated before an [angry Black Lives Matter crowd](#) that he is not in favor of a complete defunding of the city's police department, weighed in: "George Floyd's murder needs to give way to a reckoning between our words and promises of the past and actions in the present and the future. Minneapolis can and should be ground zero for addressing head-on this institutional racism that has created such deep inequities in our city and our state and our nation."

The resolution follows a veto-proof majority vote last week in which the Council stated their intention to "dismantle the Minneapolis Police Department and replace it with a transformative new model of public safety."

Council member Jeremiah Ellison, son of Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, elaborated: "We are going to dismantle the Minneapolis Police Department. And when we're done, we're not simply gonna glue it back together. We are going to dramatically rethink how we approach public safety and emergency response. It's really past due."

Minnesota Congresswoman and "Squad" member Ilhan Omar has been loudly in favor of dismantling the Minneapolis Police Department. "The Minneapolis Police Department has proven themselves beyond reform," Omar recently wrote. "It's time to disband them and reimagine public safety in



Written by [James Murphy](#) on June 14, 2020

Minneapolis.”

Black Lives Matter’s “Invest-Divest” platform describes their views on defunding police thus: “We demand investments in the education, health and safety of Black people, instead of investments in the criminalizing, caging and harming of Black people. We want investments in Black communities, determined by Black communities, and divestment from exploitative forces including prisons, fossil fuels, police surveillance and exploitative corporations.”

Despite the pressure from Black Lives Matter and far-left Democrats, the vote — veto-proof or not — may be only symbolic. The Minneapolis city charter — the list of the city’s rules, regulations and procedures — specifically mandates that the city must fund the police department at a minimum of .0017 employees per citizen. At the city’s current population, the charter states that it must have a police force of over 700 officers.

In addition, while the council is responsible for funding the police, the charter gives the mayor full discretion over the department’s rules and procedures. “The charter provides that the mayor has complete power over the police department, including establishing regulations, including maintaining the department, etc.,” said Barry Clegg, the chair of the Minneapolis Charter Commission.

The Council does have the power to change the city’s charter, but only with approval from the mayor. Frey has already stated under duress that he does not support a complete dismantling of the department. If Frey maintains that position, the Council would need to take the question of amending the city’s charter to voters.

“I don’t think it’s up to the mayor. I don’t think it’s up to the council. I think it is up to the voters,” Clegg said.

Would a majority of Minneapolis voters actually support a measure that would ultimately do away with their police force?

Given the seriousness of what the City Council is proposing, the question of dismantling the police department probably belongs to the citizens of the city. A referendum would force proponents of any new “community-led public safety system,” to define exactly what such a thing would look like before just springing it on the city.

Photo of Minneapolis skyline: Joe Christensen/iStock/Getty Images Plus

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