



New York City Council Seeks to Cut \$1 Billion From Police Budget

The New York City Council wants to cut \$1 billion from the budget of the New York Police Department (NYPD). The proposal to slash the police budget was unveiled on June 12 in a joint statement from several Council members, including the speaker.

Though the statement was very likely motivated by the anti-police protests that have occurred nationwide — including in New York City — following the death of George Floyd, a black man who died at the hands of a white Minneapolis police officer, it avoided referring to the violent nature of the protests. It described the protests as “an outpouring of New Yorkers demanding change,” as if those demands consisted of concerned citizens writing letters to or calling their elected officials. Instead, noted a Fox New report on May 28 (“George Floyd protests in NYC turn violent: Officers punched, pelted, more than 40 people arrested”): “The NYPD told Fox News that multiple officers sustained injuries, including one who was struck in the head with a garbage can and another who was punched in the face.”

“In total, the FDNY confirmed to Fox News four police officers were injured and transported to nearby hospitals.”

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Even though the City Council’s statement was unquestionably motivated by the violent protests, it was worded in such a way as to make it seem like a proposal based on economics and frugality, and only referred to the protests obliquely. It read, in part,

We believe that we can and should work to get to \$1 billion in cuts to New York City’s police spending in the Fiscal 2021 budget, an unprecedented reduction that would not only limit the scope of the NYPD, but also show our commitment towards moving away from the failed policing policies of the past....

This is possible: We have identified savings that would cut over \$1 billion dollars, including reducing uniform headcount through attrition, cutting overtime, shifting responsibilities away from the NYPD, finding efficiencies and savings in OTPS spending, and lowering associated fringe





Written by [Warren Mass](#) on June 15, 2020

expenses. As we do this, we must prioritize the most impacted communities and hear their demands and needs across all areas during this budget process. This should be a deliberative and good faith discussion of the best path forward for New York City.

Our budget must reflect the reality that policing needs fundamental reform. Over the last few weeks, we have seen an outpouring of New Yorkers demanding change from their leaders. It is our job to listen — and to act. We will not let this moment pass, and we will fight for the budget they deserve.

The City Council’s statement mirrors a [statement](#) made by Mayor Bill de Blasio on June 7, in which he said that he would redirect a percentage of the NYPD’s \$6 billion budget toward social programs.

“We’re committed to seeing a shift of funding to youth services, to social services, that will happen literally in the course of the next three weeks, but I’m not going to go into detail because it is subject to negotiation and we want to figure out what makes sense,” said de Blasio.



Image: [Franz Golhen/Wikimedia Commons](#)

Warren Mass has served The New American since its launch in 1985 in several capacities, including marketing, editing, and writing. Since retiring from the staff several years ago, he has been a regular contributor to the magazine. Warren writes from Texas and can be reached at wmass@thenewamerican.com

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