

To the City Council

We the undersigned are all people of color living in Somerville and have concerns over the conversations about defunding the police. In the wake of police killing black men across the country, we saw a movement demanding to abolish/ defund the police. We agree that police are problematic to our communities; we also understand the police are merely a tool of the oppressor and defunding the police in a vacuum will only change the tool of the oppressor.

As Ben Echevarria, Executive Director of The Welcome Project, spoke with residents of the Mystics about defunding the police there was a common theme that occurred. Over and over, resident after resident each said the same thing about replacing police with Social Workers. The common voice was that social workers are known for taking children away from their parents. It is our belief that replacing police with social workers will only rip families apart and exacerbate the traumas of our community that will be felt for generations and move the strain felt in the legal system to the foster care system.

After a shooting that occurred in the Mystic Housing Development over the summer Chief Fallon met with the community and all the people of color demanded more and better policing. We uphold that value.

Policing is a symptom of the inequities that exist in our city, state, and nation. We agree there is a need to reimagine the police. We need better training, a more progressive force, community policing, and a government that upholds the lives of black and brown people. We demand that those most impacted by police brutality be the dominant voice at the table.

We also uphold the value and importance of diversity and believe the new officers be confirmed especially if there is a need for more police for public safety. We thank you in advance.

Signed

Ben Echevarria

Andre Green

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