



Indiana

July 1, 2020

Dear Mayor,

The ACLU of Indiana encourages local leaders to acknowledge the underlying problem with policing isn't the result of a few failed policies or a couple of bad apples. The problem is the outsized and ever-expanding scale of policing that leads inevitably to officers' unlawful use of excessive force and the killing of Black men and women.

Whole communities must seize this moment and recognize that only completely reimagining policing will achieve safety and justice for their residents. The ACLU of Indiana is looking for tangible evidence of the commitment of local leadership to change the scope, size, and culture of policing in Indiana.

Most immediately we will look for strong use of force policies, 2021 budgets that commit to divesting from police and reinvesting in communities targeted by police, police labor contracts with increased accountability, and public processes that demonstrate real and sustained community engagement in creating new Public Safety systems from the ground up.

As many have acknowledged, tweaking use-of-force and other policies has not brought meaningful change in our cities, devastating murders at the hands of police are still occurring. We must rebuild, from the ground up, structures to achieve public safety for all.

To that end, the ACLU, in support of Black- and Brown-led community organizations, is urging divestment and reinvestment to create restructured policing and the criminal legal systems that will:

- Stop enforcement of a range of non-serious offenses and eliminate many of the unnecessary interactions between the police and community members;
- Implement common-sense, legally-enforceable constraints – such as banning chokeholds and empowering civilian-led Use-of-Force review boards – so that there are very rare instances in which police officers can use force against community members;
- Stop allocating funds for more officers and more militarized equipment, and instead invest in health care, education and community-run violence-prevention programs;
- Remove police from responses to mental health crises;
- Ban pretextual stops and consent searches that act as common mechanisms for police to engage in racial profiling and circumvent legal standards;
- Remove police officers from schools and invest in counselors, social workers, and health care providers.
- Ban the use of tear gas against peaceful protesters;



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Police budgets take up a large percentage of most local budgets. As our elected city leaders work on 2021 budgets, the ACLU of Indiana supports community calls to shift resources away from adding officers and militarized equipment and toward Black and Brown community-based initiatives that support true safety, health, and well-being.

Year after year, our law enforcement budgets grow. But more policing isn't making our communities safer. The lived reality that white people take for granted is what we should provide for every part of our community: an end to over-policing, an end to constant surveillance and harassment, an end to enforcement of non-serious offenses, and an end to the targeting of Black and Brown people.

We look forward to a new and just approach to public safety for everyone in our Hoosier communities.

Sincerely,

Jane Henegar

Executive Director

ACLU of Indiana