

Comments for the Toronto Police Service Board - July 16, 2020

I want the Toronto Police and the Toronto Police Services Board to not exist.

But first I want the Toronto Police Services Board to accept and admit that they are racist, that they were built with a racist purpose, that they continue that purpose to this day, and that because of this they can't actually be anti-racist and exist.

I write this as a 20 year resident of Toronto and a 20 year resident of a small town in Nova Scotia. I know that crime exists in all communities but how it is treated is very different. It is not equal. Policing in Canada and most definitely in Toronto is based in discrimination. It is built from white supremacy and based in racism.

I want Toronto Police Services Board to acknowledge and accept all of the data, all of the studies, all of the messages and asks and pleas coming not from white people like me, but from the communities who have been and are being killed and brutalized and and criminalized and over-policed and under-cared for - and I want the police to take all of that information and look at it with actual humanity and humility and acknowledge that the system of policing we have developed cannot exist in a society that wishes to be free of racism.

I want to defund the police and reinvest those funds in the social services that prevent crime and harm and need in the first place: employment, education, mental health resources, healthcare, food security, after-school programs, and the arts.

I want to defund the police and reinvest those funds in the communities that have been historically underfunded, underserved, and over-policed.

I don't want the human beings who are police officers to not have jobs but I do want policing to be a job that is not necessary. If you went into policing to serve and protect you are in the wrong business.

I want police to be de-weaponized and de-militarized. There are very few reasons police require guns.

I want police to stop responding to mental health calls.

I want community care and safety to be given back to community. I want security to come from giving people what they need to survive, not the bare minimum but enough, so that children and families and individuals don't have to move beyond the limits of what is lawful to make ends meet.

I want police out of schools. There is no reason police should be in schools. Children need love, care, understanding, opportunities, time, patience, investment in their interests, food and rest, and most of all, to feel safe. They do not need to be talked down to or punished or criminalized. It is horrific to me that police were ever brought into schools in the first place and I want them out now.

I want police out of poor communities, Black communities, Indigenous communities, communities of colour, queer communities. Like children, the individuals who make up these communities do not need to be punished or criminalized, or talked down to - they need to feel safe and cared for. They need the basics of life. They need respect and dignity and self-determination.

We all need these things to thrive in life and it is my belief that the Toronto Police Services Board and police as a system in Canada are working in direct opposition to this. Culture is changing and change is required. We do not need body cameras. We do not need more money going to the already excessive, already omnipresent and totally ineffective police force. We need a shift away from what doesn't work to keep communities safe - and that is the Toronto Police and those that serve them.

I stand behind the demands of Black Lives Matter Toronto, most easily found at defundthepolice.org. I urge the Toronto Police Services Board to immediately begin the work of meeting these demands.

Sincerely,

Molly Johnson

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