
DEFUND THE LAPD AIR SUPPORT DIVISION

1 message

From: Amanda Hunt <asimmshunt@gmail.com>

To: councilmember.cedillo@lacity.org, councilmember.Krekorian@lacity.org, councilmember.blumenfeld@lacity.org, david.ryu@lacity.org, paul.koretz@lacity.org, councilmember.martinez@lacity.org, councilmember.rodriquez@lacity.org, councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org, councilmember.price@lacity.org, councilmember.wesson@lacity.org, councilmember.bonin@lacity.org, councilmember.Lee@lacity.org, councilmember.ofarrell@lacity.org, councilmember.huizar@lacity.org, councilmember.buscaino@lacity.org, Clerk.BudgetandFinanceCommittee@lacity.org

At: Thu, Jun 18, 2020 at 9:26 AM

Dear Council Members,

I am a Solano Canyon resident terrorized by the LAPD Air Division on a daily basis. Since I began writing this email, within the span of 15 minutes, three choppers have flown over our homes. We can experience this up to 12x per day depending on the level of activity, sometimes beginning as early as 3 or 4am, or lasting for an hour or so. We are a small community, mostly of color, and feel we are unjustly, routinely harassed and targeted.

I am calling on you to support the defunding of the Los Angeles Police Air Support Division. Your constituents demand that the Los Angeles City Council look for areas where harmful law enforcement programs can be cut from the budget for the upcoming fiscal year. By withdrawing financial support for the LAPASD, the City Council can retire a politically dated program that actively harms LA residents and drains resources that could be better spent elsewhere. These funds should be redirected towards social programs to keep Angelenos safe, housed and healthy in a time of desperate need. If these choppers cost \$1200/hour to operate, and we can count up to 12 in ONE DAY, it would seem that the city is unnecessarily spending at least \$14,400 per day on what is an ineffective, racist, and abusing predatory practice.

The LAPASD is a notoriously unpopular, abusive, and costly arm of the city's law enforcement apparatus. As the past several weeks of protests against police brutality and public outcry over LA's budget have made abundantly clear, the people of Los Angeles are demanding divestment from city and county programs that harm Black, Latinx, and unhoused communities.

By 2020 estimates, it costs \$1,200 per hour to fly an LAPD helicopter—without accounting for the pilot's salary. On average, an LAPD helicopter burns the equivalent of two car tanks of gas per hour. The constant thunder of LAPD/LASAD helicopters overhead, day and night, make Angelenos feel like we live in a war zone, where our own city's division of public safety is the invading army.

The LAPASD unit cannot be justified as a crime-solving expense. In past studies, these helicopters have successfully resolved a mere six percent of car theft cases. LAPD responds to these damning statistics by arguing that the helicopters are part of a 'predictive policing' campaign to stop crime before it happens. 'Predictive policing' is essentially a euphemism for racial profiling, an issue that has long plagued the LAPD. In 2015, the ACLU of Southern California found that Black Angelenos are three times more likely to be stopped by police than white Angelenos under the program. Given the helicopters' ubiquity over neighborhoods whose residents are overwhelmingly low-income Black and/or Latinx people, it is clear that LAPD finds its air division to be an expedient way to surveil the city's non-white communities. This is simply not OK, nor justified.

No other major US city possesses a comparable amount of helicopters. If the five US cities with population levels closest to Los Angeles (New York, Chicago, Houston, Phoenix and Philadelphia) combined their fleets, they'd still have ten fewer helicopters than Los Angeles.

It is abundantly clear that the psychological and material costs of the LAPASD are far greater than its contribution to public safety, and I can attest to that personally. It is like living in a war zone. At the end of the day, the continued use of these helicopters takes away funding that could be used to benefit LA's most marginalized residents. We echo the calls of Black Lives Matter LA and other community organizations: Divest from the LAPD and invest these resources back into the community.

Please contribute to the betterment of public safety and social justice in our city by defunding the Los Angeles Police Air Support Division.

Thank you,
Amanda Hunt
cc: Councilmember Cedillo
District 1

Sent from my iPhone

1 / 1

Revisions to the city budget

1 message

From: Emmett Barnes <embarnes97@gmail.com>

To: paul.krekorian@lacity.org

At: Thu, Jun 18, 2020 at 9:10 AM

Hello,

My name is Emmett Barnes and I am a resident of Los Angeles. I am reaching out to Councilmember Krekorian to voice my opinion on the Mayor's proposed budget for Los Angeles for the next fiscal year.

I understand that the Budget and Finance Committee is meeting every Monday to discuss any changes to the proposed budget before it is finalized, and that Councilmember Krekorian is the Chair of this committee. I am also aware of the Mayor's revision to the budget removing \$150 million from the \$3 billion assigned to LAPD, and that the 'People's Budget' was presented to the committee this past Monday. This email is intended to express to Councilmember Krekorian that I support further cuts to the LAPD budget and reinvestment of those funds into other city departments.

Firstly, I believe that too much money is being allocated to LAPD. \$3 billion represents 55% of the city's budget, which appears to me to be a clear overvaluation of our police. I can think of absolutely no reason why a city would need more money invested into its law enforcement than into all of its other resources combined. Investing more in policing and punishment than in restorative and preventative areas such as education, lower housing costs, transitional housing for the homeless, community programs, after school programs, and social workers and crisis managers? That is simply the wrong way for a government to operate. Such a decision represents a government that does not prioritize its citizens or their safety and prosperity. My aim is not to criticize you or suggest that you don't support LA's citizens of color or that you are in league with police unions. My aim is merely to state that, as a citizen who would like to see equal opportunity for all Angelenos and a city that supports and empowers all of its citizens, I believe that this budget does not reflect those values. And as elected officials you all have an obligation to do better.

There are two aspects of the structure of the police department that I think are worth mentioning here briefly. The Mayor's proposed budget for LAPD includes over \$1.7 billion for salaries and almost \$11 million for equipment. The general rationale for this is that we need a lot of officers and they need to be well equipped to respond to threats and keep the city safe. However, I think these are two areas in which the Defund The Police movement makes some good points. Police forces all across this country have officers responding to incidents that they have no business resolving, e.g. domestic disputes, relocating homeless people, interacting with those with drug addictions or mental disorders. LAPD officers receive nowhere near enough training to handle those situations effectively, and the result is that we criminalize the drug addicted and ostracize the homeless and the mentally disordered. Crisis managers and social workers, as pointed out by many calling to defund the police, are better equipped to handle those situations. And so we spend less money on LAPD salaries and pensions. With regard to the cost of equipment, I believe that there has to be room for cuts. I'm sure the Councilmember has seen much of the imagery of the LAPD's response to peaceful protests (and it is important to emphasize peaceful); the imagery has been that of a militarized police force that looks like it is there to keep order rather than peace. That is an important distinction, but one that there isn't time for in this email. But a militarized police force is a reflection of the 55% of the Mayor's budget going to policing; the city appears to value punishment of its citizens over their safety and prosperity.

The \$150 million cut proposed by the Mayor represents a 5% reduction in the LAPD budget. Considering the \$3 billion is a 7% increase from the previous LAPD budget, that is still not a commitment to reducing the role of police in our city management. Their budget is still increasing, just not as much. I suspect much of the pressure that has led the LAPD budget to get as high as it is has come from the police unions, which only further leads me to believe that police salaries and pensions are higher than perhaps they should be (in addition to qualified immunity and other practices that give police unearned privileges — but as I said, there isn't time to discuss all of that in this email).

Councilmember Krekorian, all of this is intended to highlight that our system as it exists right now does not appear to serve the best interests of Los Angeles as much as it should. And in the context of the outcries from the community about the criminalizing of Black Americans at the hands of police, I ask you to remember who you were elected to serve. People are outraged, and rightfully so. And you are in a unique position to be able act in the interest of justice. I implore you to take such action. I want to be proud of the city that I live in and of the people who maintain it. Make Los Angeles proud, sir.

Regards,

Emmett Barnes

P.S. I apologize to the city clerk who had to read this email in its entirety. If the Councilmember would like to offer his response to my thoughts, I would be absolutely delighted to hear them. Thanks very much.