

Millions of people have protested for ending systemic racism and police violence against Black people. How do you understand the relationship of policing and systemic racism? To address systemic racism, how much would you emphasize reforming the police versus reinvesting policing funding elsewhere? (Word Limit: 100 Words) *

For too often and in too many communities, policing has been used as a tool to enforce systemic racism through threats of institutionalized trauma and violence. We must both reform our existing police structure, with a focus on equity in interactions & cultural competency, and also direct more funding to non-police public safety interventions, such as mental health clinicians, social workers, & substance use disorder counseling and treatment.

Budget Priorities

According to a June 2021 poll by Suffolk University and the Boston Globe, 60% of Boston voters supported taking funding from police and using that funding for social services, compared to 31% of voters who were opposed. The Boston Police Department's spending has been over \$399 million since fiscal year 2017-2018. The police have advocated for additional staffing and funds. This year many groups and residents advocated to cut the BPD budget by \$120 million or 30%.

Do you support divesting a portion of the Boston Police budget to put towards social services and community wellness? *

Yes

No

If yes, how much of the current \$400 million police budget would you cut? Please give a numeric answer in millions. (If you answered no to the previous question, enter 0.) *

60

Local, grassroots organizations led by people impacted by police violence, are calling locally and nationally for funding to support transformative approaches to harm, violence, and crisis in our neighborhoods that relies on community members, their relationships and mutuality, rather than a reliance on the police force.

Do you support funding a community-led initiative for transformative justice that focuses on community wellness and safety, completely disconnected from law enforcement? *

Yes

No

If yes, how much funding from the city budget would you put towards this community-led initiative? Please give a numeric answer in millions. (If you answered no to the previous question, enter 0.) *

18.75

Community groups have called for decreasing the number of police, including through a hiring freeze and moving positions out of the police department to social services and other new community initiatives. The police department is calling for increasing the size of the police force. In FY19, FY20, and FY21, there was one police academy class; the current FY22 budget includes two police academy classes for a total of 250 potential new officers, one beginning in the summer of 2021 and one beginning in early 2022.

Would you advocate for a hiring freeze for BPD (i.e. no new classes) from Nov. 2021-Jun 2023?

*

Yes

No

What is your position on the number of police officers that there should be compared to the current size of the police force, and what is your plan for reaching your goals for the size of the police force? (Word Limit: 100 Words) *

I believe that we can reduce the size of the current BPD headcount for officers. I would like to conduct a more thorough analysis of job responsibilities to determine how much can be shifted to other providers outside of the department. I would also like to work with the city's personnel office to determine a realistic timeline for anticipated reduction of force size due to retirements. These would help guide decisions on the number of officers, as well as the appropriate steps to decrease the force.

A report from the ACLU of Massachusetts argues that there has been no relationship between spending on overtime and the size of the force for at least 20 years. The Boston Police Department has advocated for increasing hiring to address their consistent overspending on the overtime budget. What will you do to address the issue of BPD exceeding its overtime budget? (Word Limit: 100 Words) *

As an item defined and guaranteed within the larger collective bargaining agreement overtime spending will be most effectively managed through rigorous negotiation. We should work to initially reduce the minimum number of guaranteed hours of pay from 4 to 2 for overtime shifts. This will see immediate cost savings and also set the foundation and precedent for future negotiations aimed at achieving more efficient spending on overtime.

Between 2017 and 2020, police collectively earned on average just under \$27 million each year working just construction details—roughly the size of the entire Parks Department budget. In addition, the Boston Police Department testified last year that they fill only roughly half of all requested details. While the average BPD employee working details earned about \$17,000 last year, a budget of between \$25 and \$50 million could create hundreds of full-time, union jobs. If you had complete control of construction details, who would you want working construction details and what department in the city should handle them? (Word Limit: 100 Words) *

I would like to see details assigned based on level of risk. For high-risk areas, such as major intersections, I would assign a member of the city's first responder corps, including Boston Fire & Boston EMS. For lower risk sites I would like to assign civilian flaggers, paid at a prevailing wage, to help manage traffic and safety. I would like to see these flaggers operate under the Boston Transportation Department, who I would assign to assess the risk level and direct personnel accordingly.

Open response: please share any additional thoughts or explanations for your answers from this section. (Word Limit: 100 Words)

For the question on cuts to the BPD budget I believe that we should start at \$60 million and conduct regular intensive program evaluation for the alternative interventions that are being funded to ensure that they are achieving their desired effect. We should use this data on a regular basis to make any necessary adjustments to funding in order to reach community-led goals for public safety & quality of life outcomes.

Militarization & Surveillance

The Boston Regional Intelligence Center (BRIC) was established in 2005 by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to reduce crime and prevent terrorism, and includes representatives from DHS and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). BRIC administers the gang database and runs the Real Time Crime Center. BRIC collects and shares information between the Metro Boston Homeland Security Regional (MBHSR) communities, private-sector stakeholders, universities, and state- and Federal-level partners. MBHSR includes Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Quincy, Revere, Somerville, and Winthrop.

Many community members and organizations have advocated for abolishing the gang database because of its racial disparities and the impact it has on Black and Brown people in Boston. Do you support abolishing the gang database? *

Yes

No

BRIC officers and analysts have advocated for additional staffing and funding to support the Real Time Crime Center, which includes surveillance feeds from at least 750 cameras across Boston. The BRIC is capable of accessing camera footage from the Boston Transportation Department, the MBTA and the Boston Housing Authority. According to Stanford University, Boston has the highest density of surveillance cameras of large American cities. Many Bostonians don't know that these cameras exist and feed to a surveillance center that connects local, state, and federal law enforcement.

Do you support eliminating the Real Time Crime Center? *

Yes

No

What is your stance on BPD's use of surveillance technology, including cameras, license plate readers, and ShotSpotter? (Word Limit: 100 Words) *

Surveillance technologies used by law enforcement, particularly those that are constantly collecting data from the general public, must be carefully and strictly regulated. A key component of this must be regular review to identify and adjust for any biases evidenced in the system. This information must also be made public on a predictable, reliable timeline, with full explanation in layman's terms. All of these efforts must fall under a larger umbrella of actions taken to reduce or eliminate these technologies from neighborhoods whenever possible.

During 2014-2016, BRIC surveilled social media targeting Muslims for using common terms like ummah (community) and Black activists using #BlackLivesMatter. Former City Councilor Tito Jackson had a facebook post on racial inequality included in BRIC's surveillance. BRIC's impact on Black, Muslim and Immigrant Bostonians has led to many community organizations advocating to abolish the BRIC. Do you support abolishing the BRIC? *

Yes

No

BRIC is just one of the two fusion centers in Massachusetts, the other one being the Commonwealth Fusion Center. Fusion centers were created by DHS to facilitate information sharing between law enforcement agencies at all levels. What is your stance on BPD's participation in the Commonwealth Fusion Center? (Word Limit: 100 Words) *

Interdepartmental information sharing can be valuable within the larger context of regional security efforts. While the CFC has a different orientation and vantage point than the BRIC, there are still major concerns. For these reasons I believe that there can be value to BPD participating in the CFC, but that this relationship must have strictly defined boundaries that make protection & preservation of civil liberties a primary focus in all communications and efforts.

Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF) are run by the FBI in 106 cities across the US, including Boston. At least five cities have pulled out of task forces since 2017 due to issues of transparency in leadership and accountability to local protocols on police conduct. These officers are authorized FBI agents and don't have to abide by local law enforcement regulations, making them immune to civilian lawsuits (e.g. the FBI can investigate anyone with no criminal predicate). JTTFs often impact Muslims through unexpected and intimidating interrogations at their homes. Community groups have advocated for ending the Boston JTTF. Do you support ending Boston Police participation in the Joint Terrorism Task Force? *

Yes

No

Since 2003, the Anti-Defamation League has sent delegations of law enforcement officers from the US to Israel for a counter-terrorism training to learn from the Israel National Police and Israel Defense Forces. Organizations in the US, like Jewish Voice for Peace, have called for an end to these exchanges where local and federal law enforcement learn “worst practices.” Durham, North Carolina became the first city to ban its police from training with foreign security forces and in that same year, Northampton canceled its police chief’s plans to attend the ADL sponsored trip. Would you ban the Boston Police Department from participating in foreign security trainings, including these ADL sponsored trips to Israel and similar counterterrorism trainings? *

Yes

No

Open response: please share any additional thoughts or explanations for your answers from this section. (Word Limit: 100 Words)

While I do not believe that BPD should participate in counterterrorism training trips, members of the department should have the ability to learn from other departments, who may be engaged in more community-centered and humane responses to public safety challenges. As such I do not believe BPD should be banned from such learning exchanges.

Police Contract

The next mayor will have a major role in negotiating new contracts with all the major police collective bargaining units, whose contracts all expired in 2020. Most of the major initiatives relating to public safety in Boston—including alternative emergency response, civilianizing construction details, and controlling overtime in the BPD—will depend on the results of these negotiations. Although the City Council has no direct role in these negotiations, City Council does have the power ultimately to approve or reject the negotiated contracts. If you are on the Council, what changes and provisions will you look for in these contracts when you decide whether to approve or reject them? *

As a Councilor I will be looking for changes to overtime pay structures and guarantees; investment in community & social service oriented public safety interventions; operational changes to increase diversity within BPD - with realistic timelines and assessment metrics; & changes to training at the Academy, among other provisions.

Schools & Youth

Boston Public Schools is currently in the process of changing some aspects of their school policing program (previously named the Boston School Police), while keeping much of the program structure and funding intact. Some of these changes include shifting to newly designed plainclothes uniforms and renaming the program. School police also had their powers reduced because of the police reform law passed by the state legislature in 2020. An alternative vision for school safety is that holistic approaches such as school counselors and restorative justice programs are under-resourced, and that the school police program should be completely eliminated in favor of expanding and creating programs with no basis in law enforcement.

Do you support eliminating the current school police program and replacing it with safety and wellness initiatives based on a community- and student-led planning process with no basis in law enforcement? *

Yes

No

Describe your vision for maintaining, changing, eliminating, or replacing the current school police program, and how community and students would be part of planning safety and wellness initiatives in schools. (Word Limit: 100 Words) *

I would like to see schools where students do not interact with law enforcement on a regular basis, as I believe this contributes to an institutionalized mentality and is detrimental to creating positive social/emotional learning environments. I would like to see school site advisory committees, composed of students, administrators, parents, & teachers, focused on developing and implementing safety plans - and doing so after first making the effort to solicit input and feedback from students. The results of these efforts should be brought to each respective classroom within a school environment, for dissemination, further discussion, and adoption. The ultimate goal being to create a school that is safe because everyone truly feels they have agency and a reason to connect to the project.

The Boston Police department runs a number of programs and initiatives to engage community members, including an ice cream truck, fishing with young people, National Night Out, and youth jobs based out of the police department. Previously, Boston police participated in a community policing program called Youth and Police Initiative Plus, which targeted Somali youth based on the racist and Islamophobic assumption that they are prone to becoming violent. Due to community advocacy, the BPD ended their participation in this program but continues to control funding for youth programs or engage other youth who are deemed “at-risk” of becoming violent through Shannon grants, Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI), the Youth Violence Strike Force (aka the gang unit) and other initiatives.

What is your stance on police officers engaging youth, especially minors, through this type of programming? (Word Limit: 100 Words) *

Interactions between youth and law enforcement must be strictly scrutinized, carefully regulated, and limited overall. SSYI funding should be reallocated to Boston Centers for Youth and Families to support programming within that department.

Would you support moving funds from these initiatives to community-led and youth-led violence prevention work where police are not involved or do not control the funding? *

Yes

No

Open response: please share any additional thoughts or explanations for your answers from this section. (Word Limit: 100 Words)

Healthcare and Crisis Response

According to a recent report from Citizens for Juvenile Justice, over 75% of incidents that the Boston Police respond to are not “violent.” This includes a wide variety of incidents, from animal incidents (dog bites, lost dogs, etc) to verbal disputes between Bostonians. About 6.5% of all incidents are “sick assists” which include mental health incidents. The city of Boston is currently developing alternative ways to respond to mental health crises. The current plan from Health and Human Services is to (1) enhance BPD’s current collaboration with Boston Medical Center clinicians, aka the BEST team; (2) to establish a new co-response team with clinicians and EMTs; and (3) to fund a community led process to establish a community-led response.

Do you support establishing non-police response to mental health crises? *

Yes

No

Do you support establishing non-police response to a larger set of incidents beyond mental health crises? *

Yes

No

Of the three models that Boston is currently pursuing for responding to mental health crises (listed above), which would you put the most emphasis on? *

1

2

3

In a two week period in July three people died in the Suffolk County House of Correction at South Bay. One of these three was a woman who died in a holding cell after being involuntarily, civilly committed for substance use disorder, under the Commonwealth's G.L. c. 123, Section 35. The Boston Police Department will, among other methods, use Section 35s when confronting people with substance use disorder. How do you think the city should use its resources to confront the overdose crisis and what initiatives, such as safe injection sites or improved options for treatment, would you pursue to ensure that the city takes an equitable and effective public health approach to the overdose crisis? (Word Limit: 100 Words) *

We must begin by recognizing the humanity of everyone struggling with substance use disorder. We should increase access to mental health clinicians, social workers and substance use counseling/treatment beds. For those who are unhoused or housing insecure we must implement a "housing first" model to get them into stable housing in order to facilitate reliable delivery of services and treatment. We should create, and adequately fund, safe injection sites. Boston should also be leading a regional dialogue on substance use issues as addiction does not respect boundaries, and many caught in it are from outside of the city.

Thousands of people are arrested each year in the City of Boston for minor offenses like driving without a license, drug possession, and disorderly conduct. In turn, police involvement in actions like traffic stops and the Field Investigation Observation program have been shown to disproportionately affect Black people. As reported in the Boston Globe, a recent study has found that “not prosecuting low-level crimes was more successful in directing nonviolent offenders away from the criminal justice system.” Rachael Rollins has sought to pursue such a policy for many low-level offenses during her term, but she has now been nominated to be a U.S. Attorney for Massachusetts. Regardless of who the new District Attorney may be, to what extent would you want the police and the legal system involved in managing these low-level offenses? And what policies would you want your Police Commissioner and the Department of Health and Human Services to enact to approach these issues? (Word Limit: 100 Words) *

We have seen empirical data that shows the approach of DA Rollins is working. We must continue to engage in these efforts and amplify them whenever possible. The more that can be done to keep law enforcement and the legal system as removed from these low level offenders as possible, the better - both in terms of more efficient use of resources & diversion from interactions with the criminal justice system that can have lingering effects. I would like to see the Commissioner establish policies that more directly instruct officers to engage with clinicians and social service providers, via a connection with HHS, from the outset of engagement.

Open response: please share any additional thoughts or explanations for your answers from this section. (Word Limit: 100 Words)

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