

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) *

Our office has fought to find ways to reinvest police funding towards proven violence prevention forms used during The Boston Miracle. Last year, our office worked with advocates from across the city to co-sponsor an ordinance that would offer an alternative response to non-violent emergency calls that would otherwise involve an armed police officer. The funding for this pilot program was secured in the FY22 budget and we are proud that the advocates we worked with also played a role in advocating the administration to implement the pilot program in a way that addresses the systemic racism that exists in our policing system.

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

Response amended, candidate meant to check 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.) *

80

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.) *

10

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) *

We learned during the budget season that the Commissioner of Police is supposed to provide weekly reports to the Council in regards to staffing and overtime. Without that accountability measure, it's hard to know exactly what numbers our precincts should be staffed at. What we do know is that we need to see fewer armed police officers and more social workers, case managers, licensed socio-emotional care providers, all managed under our Public Health Commission.

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) *

One of the biggest barriers to any kind of police reform, particularly in the overtime space, is that the City Council does not have a seat at the table when it comes to collective bargaining. So while our office has pushed for an overtime cap based on the number of hours worked, we need to first push to make sure that the voices of the people are represented in all BPPA collective bargaining agreements.

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) *

Construction details should not be the responsibility of the police. As the Chair of the Committee on Workforce Development, we have an opportunity here to give jobs across the city to hundreds, if not thousands of people, that are currently being occupied by police officers collecting overtime, something for which I have advocated for years. These jobs should be placed under the Public Works Department and we should be prioritizing low-income communities of color when it comes to hiring standards.

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

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) *

I was proud to support the ban on facial recognition technology which passed in the City Council. This year, our office also managed to fight to eliminate an RFP that would have greatly expanded the Boston Police Department's security camera apparatus. However, I know that we need to do more in order to protect the privacy of people in Boston and to address the systemic injustices that are brought about by the use of this invasive technology. I am deeply concerned about the efficacy and bias in using a system like Shot Spotter, and support eliminating their use in Boston.

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) *

Our office has worked with advocates from across the city, including the ACLU, SIM, LCR, Justice Center of Southeast Massachusetts and more to address information sharing between the BPD and other agencies both on the state and federal level. We need to do as much as we can to ensure that the data privacy of our residents is upheld and protected to the greatest degree possible.

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)

I am a fierce advocate for abolishing the gang database. Since before the most recent budget season, I have spoken with both advocates and the Mayor, sometimes daily, in order to create an effective strategy to abolish the gang database. The reasons are clear: In a city with a roughly 25% Black population, Black residents make up a total of 66.4% of the gang database. In total, over 90% of the gang database are people of color. The discrimination is clear and we need to put a stop to it.

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? *

One of the biggest problems with the negotiating process is that the City Council does not play a role, and it is ineffective to reduce our power to a simple yes-or-no vote. The first thing we need to do is make sure that the voices of the people are at the bargaining table. From there, we also need to put a cap on overtime, reduce the minimum payout for overtime so that officers working 15 minutes are not paid out for four hours, and eliminate the construction detail.

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) *

Our office filed a hearing order to discuss how Boston Public Schools could better utilize restorative justice practices in replacement of the over-policed environments our children go to school in currently. Our panel featured teachers, administrators, and students as well, who each shared their vision for what safety and wellness looked like for them in school. It didn't involve school police but instead envisioned a school where teachers, administrators, parents, and students were able to work cooperatively to promote wellness in our schools.

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) *

We have called for the Shannon grants to be administered through other departments besides the police. This money goes towards a number of great programs that work to bring people together across their differences, but to place that money in the hands of the police sends a message that these conversations and this work must be overseen by people with guns. That is wrong and we need to be more intentional about the message we are sending when we place money into the hands of certain departments.

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? *

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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) *

I have voiced my support for safe consumption sites in the past and am committed to working with the community to ensure that there is a full continuum of care available to people across the city. Our campaign office was the first in 2019 to offer overdose prevention training to campaign volunteers, and even handed out narcan. I believe that there is still a lot of work that needs to be done in order to educate residents about crucial information regarding overdoses.

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) *

The study reported in the Boston Globe is spot on. We have seen not only how prosecuting low-level offenses can dramatically impact somebody's future beyond what is reasonably necessary, but how these prosecutions have disproportionately impacted communities of color. We need to be focusing our attention more on restorative justice and other proven public health/economic empowerment strategies for dealing with low-level offenses. I would like to see the Police Commissioner adopt internal policies towards directing people, especially young people, who have committed low-level offenses, towards job preparedness programs, mental health programs, and other services instead of directing them towards jail.

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

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