

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) *

My approach to public safety relies on coalition building with non-profit organizations to promote a collective vision for wellness and safety. I commit to working with community leaders to advocate for policies that center equity and foster sustainable, healthy living. I believe we must re-envision Boston's public safety budget to include support for mental health services, community-based resources, as well as allocate funding to home ownership in low-income census-tract communities. I would collaborate with organizers to promote community driven policing policies with active non-police oversight. This includes shifting reliance to a dedicated civilian team or City Hall office where possible.

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.) *

0

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.) *

0.....

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) *

Due to record retirements, the size of the police force is naturally changing. We have not yet instituted sufficient institutional reform at the BPD to have a functioning public safety with a hiring freeze, so I worry about the potential ripple effects and unintended consequences it would have, and I'm concerned about vengeful responses from within as a result of any freeze

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) *

I will hold the BPD accountable for disparities in policing and accountability, and will review contracts with all of the unions to limit uses of overtime and civilianize some aspects of modern-day police work. I will lean on the data-rich analyses provided by groups like the ACLU of Massachusetts at the BPD budget hearing that I attended where they presented excellent data.

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) *

Trained civilians who are residents of Boston, perhaps a pipeline in partnership with Madison Park vocational schools, and working with the Department of Public Works.

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

Groups like Families for Justice as Healing have done great work in trying to assess an exact number on the amount of the budget that needs to be reallocated, I believe at this time the call for structural change within the Boston Police Department makes it difficult to put a number on what a more efficient, effective, and just BPD would look like. We MUST ensure less expense on overtime and overtime fraud, a rampant issue within the BPD that is a waste of our tax dollars. When it comes to community-led initiative for transformative justice, I would prioritize working in partnership with community organizations to determine their needs and the most effective solutions, and then increase budget to fund those opportunities accordingly.

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) *

We must limit the growth of our surveillance state to ensure we are not trampling on individual privacy rights or discriminating against individuals.

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) *

I support the calls from the Muslim Justice League, ACLU, and many others to eliminate BRIC. From a history of First Amendment violations in Boston, to their role in threatening local immigrant students with deportation, to a 2012 bipartisan Congressional report concluding fusion centers such as the BRIC have been unilaterally ineffective at preventing terrorism; I would reallocate resources that have been used to fund BRIC to effective community programming to address the public health response to the opioid and mental health crises.

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)

When it comes to ending Boston Police participation in the Joint Terrorism Task Force, I would end BPD participation If our local police are not held accountable to local laws during the JTTF.

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? *

I would look for the following: mandatory use of body-worn cameras during all shifts including overtime and mandatory identification as police officer; limit use of overtime (no overtime pay for, e.g., transporting people in custody, delivering drugs/evidence); reduce minimum staffing levels; participate in mandatory vicarious trauma training (officers are human and get exposed to traumatic situations); shift work to a civilian team or City Hall office where possible, including, construction sites; create a zero-tolerance list for actions that will lead to immediate termination; increased data tracking on use of force incidents; maintain ban on use of biometrics and facial recognition technology

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 advocate for a smaller student to license guidance counselor ratio under the Boston Teachers Union contract. Our students are currently experiencing mental health crises and we need to be able to meet them where they are and help them prepare for future careers and/or college. We must also invest in alternative and restorative justice practices to address problematic behavior, and take student and teacher input on on what accountability should look like for student-based disruptions in the school setting.

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) *

Given that the YPIS program included the Somali Community and Cultural Association which later withdrew because of unfair targeting of their community and alleged extremism, I would not support that type of programming. There are some programs and efforts that can be effective in building stronger relationships between youth and members of the BPD if more police bought into the community policing model, something that could happen with more institutional reform at BPD.

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) *

Investing in public health and mental health resources is critical. COVID-19 has revealed how unprepared we are to face major health crises, and how deep racism--a public health crisis itself--affects health outcomes. We must invest in partnering with hospitals and community health centers to tackle opioid abuse, mental health resources and accessibility, and homelessness - a 2 week stint in rehab will not ensure that people recover from addiction. It requires much more. We must invest in supportive housing and wraparound services. We can make it easier to build supportive housing by providing builders with complete zoning relief. We must decentralize services and ensure that Governor Baker is using the power of the purse to force other cities to develop their own resources to tackle the crises instead of sending their residents to Boston.

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) *

People with low-level marijuana offenses as a matter of law should have their past convictions cleaned from their record. I will work with my partners at City Hall and the State House to adjust the process so these mostly Black and Latinx people do not continue to have their lives altered by the racist and classist war on drugs. Deterrence from any interaction with our criminal legal system should always be the goal. We must not criminalize poverty, avoid prosecuting low-level offenses, and fund restorative justice alternatives and diversion programs.

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

When it comes to the current plan from Health and Human Services, I would be open to option 3, however I would want to develop concrete plans with more specificity regarding what community led responses would look like and how robust they would be.

This form was created inside of Muslim Justice League.

Google Forms