

Communication from Public

Name: Emma Buerklin
Date Submitted: 06/28/2020 10:22 PM
Council File No: 20-0769
Comments for Public Posting: I strongly support the motion by Herb Wesson (CD10) and Marqueece Harris-Dawson (CD8) to invest in alternative, unarmed service providers for non-violence emergency calls.

Communication from Public

Name: Julia Switzky

Date Submitted: 06/28/2020 05:05 PM

Council File No: 20-0769

Comments for Public Posting: I urge you to approve this measure and begin the process of allocating funds away from LAPD and into services that actually help people. Police are not social workers. We do not want them interacting with mentally ill, homeless or any other person who is not actively violent. We need to stop using police in this way because they are not the correct tool for these issues.

Communication from Public

Name: Lisa Wu

Date Submitted: 06/28/2020 05:14 PM

Council File No: 20-0769

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing to voice my continued support with the motion to develop an unarmed model of crisis response that would divert services away from the LAPD. I applaud the council members who have already expressed support for this motion for taking a much-needed step in protecting LA's most vulnerable citizens, particularly those who are mentally ill or unhoused. I grew up as an upper-middle class Asian-American with little to no interaction with law enforcement. However, last year my family experienced its first brush with both law enforcement and the criminal justice system through my brother, a young college student who after an ill-advised personal decision to consume a hallucinogenic drug found himself in a personal moment of crisis. Campus police was called by another neighboring student in the dorms, not because my brother had threatened him physically or caused any harm, but simply because they were the default authority to call in the event of any potential crisis. In his heightened state, my brother's reaction to the officers' aggressive attempts to detain him as a direct attack. Though I would not classify the action on part of law enforcement as "excessive force", they did deploy a Taser, spit guard, and caused visible injuries to his face. He was eventually charged with a felony charge of resisting a police officer. Prior to this, my brother had no prior criminal record, nor did he have any previous infractions or exhibit signs of violence at any other given point in his life. As many kids his age do, he was undergoing a huge amount of stress in an academically rigorous environment and had developed depressive/anxious symptoms that were a worsening of his already tenuous mental health. He made a decision to self-medicate with a drug that he didn't truly understand, alone in his dorm room with no pre-mediated thought to put anyone near him in danger. What followed this incident was months of dragged on legal proceedings and legal fees for my family in order to reduce jail time and the severity of the charge down to a misdemeanor. However, even though legal resolution was achieved, that did not mean work was over. Now, even over a year after the incident, my brother is still fighting every day for full recovery of his mental health. It has taken so much ongoing therapy, consistent care and attention, as well as an arduous process of adjusting medication to get him to this point. I often think about how he must have felt in

that moment as he was terrified for his life and experiencing hallucinations and wonder what would have happened if there had been someone else there, experienced in the effects of drug use, to talk him down, to de-escalate him from his heightened state. The crime he was charged with of "resisting an officer" would not have even existed without the presence of the police in the first place- it was the nature of the response that brought it into existence, like a self-fulfilling prophecy. Undergoing the legal process that followed did not help him in his rehabilitation, nor was it commensurate with the infraction that he was already being reasonably disciplined for through school policy. I tell this story not to paint a picture of my brother as any sort of Platonic ideal for the type of person who could benefit from alternatives to law enforcement as a crisis response, but instead to draw attention to how it could have lead to far more devastating outcomes for many others. If my brother were BIPOC, if my family had less financial and social capital, the end result would have been vastly different. Instead of being on the road to recovery and with optimism for his future, there would be yet another young person dealing with debilitating mental health without access to treatment in one of our overflowing prisons or jails, worrying about his future prospects now that he has a felony on his record, paving the way for potential recidivism. It haunts me to think about how many young people could be irreparably damaged simply because they were born into less privileged circumstances. Particularly in cases with young people in crisis, we must consider alternatives to both law enforcement as first responders as well as alternatives to incarceration. A diversion of services should also necessitate a diversion of funds. If the police are no longer functioning to respond to calls for services in non-violent situations, which according to their own reports makes up for a bulk of their service calls, they should no longer require all 3 billion of their currently allocated funding to resume their more scaled back operations. I would like to once again emphasize that any funding that will be allocated toward the creation of a new alternative crisis response model should come directly out of the LAPD's existing budget, not be picked apart from the pool of other departments currently already struggling in the wake of COVID-19.