

2021 DEFUND SURVEILLANCE DEMANDS

LAPD spends over \$3.1 billion a year, consuming more than half the city's unrestricted funds.

Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets this summer calling on Mayor Garcetti and the City Council defund LAPD. A recent City-commissioned study shows that over 62% of Angelenos support proposals to “redirect some money currently going to the police budget to local programs” and around 37% support proposals to “completely dismantle police departments.”

Here are seven defund demands joining these calls, focused on the outsized harm of LAPD's spending on surveillance, technology, and community policing:

Defund and disarm LAPD of all weapons of surveillance. LAPD is one of the country's most technologically resourced police departments, using surveillance technology and data-mining to target, control, criminalize, and harm our communities.

End all LAPD siphoning of funds and data from other city departments. In addition to the \$3.1 billion LAPD is directly allocated, police also take money and data from the budgets of other departments, appropriating vital resources and expanding surveillance.

End all federal spending on LAPD. LAPD gets tens of millions of dollars of federal grant money each year, used to fuel LAPD's killing and stalking of our people. City Council's Public Safety Committee has the power to reject this money and must do so immediately.

Abolish the CSP surveillance program. In July 2020, LAPD announced the creation of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Bureau. CSPs embed police in targeted communities where they collect data, map community networks, and operate social programs. CSP not only targets communities for surveillance, it also holds us hostage: precious and necessary resources and services are only offered through the police budget, and then most of that money goes to officer payroll.



Abolish LAPD's propaganda units. LAPD's Public Communications Group includes over 40 staff responsible for constantly deceiving the public and attacking victims and critics of LAPD violence. LAPD should not be given even one dollar to deceive us.



Abolish LAPD's fraudulent oversight body. The Police Commission is a rubber stamp whose role is to legitimize all the harm LAPD wants to pursue. Ending this body is an important first step in ending LAPD's violence.

Background

The Defund Surveillance campaign is a collaboration between Stop LAPD Spying Coalition and Free Radicals that came together in the wake of the George Floyd uprising and the city's failure to take seriously the Black Lives Matter movement's calls to defund the police. In June, Mayor Garcetti and the City Council cut LAPD's share of the city budget by a meager \$12 million. Although LAPD and city officials claimed the police budget had been cut by \$150 million, the truth is that LAPD was allocated \$1.733 billion in FY 2019-2020 and \$1.721 billion for FY 2020-2021 – a 0.7% reduction. Worse, the majority of this reduction came out of LAPD's overtime budget, a limit LAPD never has to abide by when sending police out on overtime, which means this "reduction" might even increase police spending over time.

Our campaign joins People's Budget LA in continued calls to defund the police, focusing on the outsized impact of LAPD's spending on surveillance, technology, and community policing. After a participatory budget process surveying over 24,000 people from across the city, People's Budget LA announced that the community intended just 1.64% of city funds to go to law enforcement and policing, far less than the 54% given to the LAPD in the Mayor's proposed budget." LAPD knows that demands to defund and dismantle policing are extremely popular: this December, the Los Angeles Police Commission shared findings from a City-commissioned study showing that 62.4% of Angelenos support proposals to "redirect some money currently going to the police budget to local programs" and 36.7% support proposals to "completely dismantle police departments and give more financial support to local programs."

The Defund Surveillance campaign has been working to demystify LAPD's budget, to expose the ways it has grown over time, and to demand cuts to the police budget. Defunding the police is not an end goal but a long-term strategy for abolition. Policing and surveillance will cause harm to our communities no matter how cheap it is. The city budget is a reflection of values. During the overlapping crises of the pandemic and economic recession, now more than ever we need to invest in communities and life-affirming solutions. That requires defunding and abolishing the life-threatening systems of surveillance and policing.

Detailed Campaign Demands

1. Defund and disarm LAPD of all weapons of surveillance. LAPD is one of the most technologically resourced police departments in the country, with a surveillance arsenal ranging from drones, facial recognition software, dash cams, Stingrays, automatic license-plate readers, and predictive policing algorithms. Together these technologies embed policing and surveillance into our cityscape and everyday lives. This Stalker State accelerates and centralizes the collection of data engineered to target, control, criminalize, and harm our Black and brown, low-income, unhoused, disabled, and queer and trans communities.

2. End all LAPD siphoning of funds and data from other city departments. In addition to the \$3.1 billion that LAPD is directly paid from the City, over \$100 million of additional funds are also sent to LAPD each year out of the budgets of departments like MTA, Library Services, and Homelessness. By expanding the police state into these other aspects of our public infrastructure, LAPD is appropriating deeply needed resources to expanding the Stalker State into vital city services.

3. End all federal spending on LAPD. The LAPD's budget is not only comprised of billions of dollars of the city's money, but tens of millions of dollars of federal grant money for policing each year, from the Department of Homeland Security's Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), and Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grants from Department of Justice, as well as free military gear through the 1033 program. This money and weaponry fuels LAPD's killing and stalking of our people. LAPD uses UASI to develop its deadly surveillance infrastructure under the banner of "counterterrorism," and it used NIJ grant money to partner with UCLA researchers in developing and deploying the racist predictive policing algorithm PredPol. Similarly, BJA grant money supported the development of LAPD's racial profiling program Operation LASER. Both programs were shut down by community organizing but not before BJA exported the practices tested on Angelenos to other sites around the country through more grants. Finally the COPS grant money and the 1033 program have contributed not only to the flow of military gear to the LAPD but also expressly required LAPD to hire soldiers from post-9/11 US military occupations to bring their counterinsurgency experience to policing LA neighborhoods. The Public Safety Committee of City Council has the power to reject all federal money to the LAPD - we demand they do so immediately.

4. Abolish the Community-Safety Partnerships (CSP) surveillance program. In July 2020, LAPD announced the creation of a Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Bureau, couched in response to the uprising against police violence and racial terror. LAPD saw the uprising as an opportunity to expand this counterinsurgency program that they had been developing for around a decade. CSPs embed police in targeted communities, including housing projects and certain public parks, where they collect data, map community networks, and operate social programs in the community, while also criminalizing "quality of life issues" like "loitering." These social programs allow the LAPD to cultivate informants with "Neighborhood Watch" teams and "build trust" among a community that they themselves view with suspicion. This program not only targets Black and brown communities for increased surveillance, but it holds us hostage: precious and necessary resources and services are only offered through the police budget and then most of that money goes to officer payroll. The harm of CSP was made possible over time with the approval of "civil-rights" organizations completing perfunctory "anti-bias" trainings. We demand that the LAPD abolish the CSP program and that the city give the resources directly to the communities.

5. Abolish LAPD's propaganda divisions. LAPD's Public Communications Group includes over 40 staff spanning a Media Relations Section, Digital Media Section, Online Unit, and Social Media Strategic Community Unit. This group is responsible for constantly deceiving the public about police harm as well as character assassination of both victims and critics of LAPD violence. And more broadly, its role is pacifying important criticism of police. At the same time LAPD spends millions on these efforts, it also violates public record laws, hiding crucial information from the public and complaining about activists and researchers who are working to confront harm caused by LAPD. LAPD should not be spending even one dollar to propagandize and deceive.

6. Abolish LAPD's fraudulent oversight body. The Los Angeles Police Commission purports to provide public oversight and accountability for LAPD's actions, but in reality this body just rubber stamps and legitimizes all the harm LAPD wants to pursue. The budget process is a prime example of this. This summer, when we asked the Police Commission's Executive Director – a position whose salary range is \$151,338 to \$227,341 – if he had access to documents accounting for LAPD's full budget, he responded he had never seen these. Later when LAPD proposed a \$106 million budget increase while trying to characterize this proposal as a budget reduction, hundreds of Angelenos called out this falsehood and demanded the Commission to delay a vote on LAPD's proposal. The Commissioners ignored those comments and, two business days after LAPD released its 600 page budget proposal, voted to approve it with zero changes. Commissioners made clear in their comments that they had not read the budget, and some even remarked that they did not know whether they had power to modify LAPD's proposal. More recently, the Commission approved LAPD's plans to use facial recognition - even after 931 out of 943 emails to the commission (99%!) demanded a ban on facial recognition. Ending this useless rubber-stamp body is an important first step in ending LAPD's violence.

7. End tech industry and academic collaboration and complicity with LAPD. Police violence against Black and brown communities is not only enabled by facial recognition and predictive policing algorithms, but by mundane, everyday technologies that police use to generate, manage, and store their data. The technological infrastructure that companies have sold to LAPD for these purposes are responsible for targeting and criminalizing our people. Companies like Microsoft write statements about racial justice with one hand while raking in millions of dollars in profit from the LAPD with the other. We demand that all tech companies end business with the LAPD and all other police departments. Academic institutions also make similar statements about their solidarity with Black communities and condemn but then fund research that allows for harmful policing to be created and legitimized in the first place. We demand that all academic institutions end research that provides the LAPD with further tools of surveillance.

#DefundSurveillance