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September 23, 2021

Dear Mayor Fischer and Members of Louisville Metro Council,

In the last 48 hours, our city has been devastated by more violence. This ongoing problem affects every person in Louisville, but especially the Black and Brown families who have borne the brunt of it for centuries. Despite these tragedies, we believe peace is possible and that we must remain radically optimistic as we seek solutions for a safer future. While many options must be considered, we know this safer future *cannot* be achieved through force. We strongly reject any proposal that includes increased use of incarceration, policing, or surveillance – especially involving our children.

A wide body of research has proven these measures increase negative and sometimes dangerous interactions between law enforcement and children, particularly Black children, children with disabilities, and children from families with low incomes. Actions often viewed as one of the first steps in an interaction, such as putting a child in handcuffs, can dramatically change the trajectory of a child's life in ways that may be irreversible. These problems grow to be even worse as punishments escalate to measures like youth detention and removing a child from their home, their family, and their community.

Our city budget is a reflection of our community's values and is in desperate need of a reassessment. It is *long past time* we invest in the peacemakers and peacemaking institutions our community has neglected budget cycle after budget cycle. Through federal investment and the re-prioritization of our own budget, our city has an unprecedented opportunity to create the Louisville our children deserve. At a minimum we must robustly fund the Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods, but we can't stop there. We must ensure that every single Louisvillian has access to safe and clean housing, quality public education, accessible and practical transportation, convenient and affordable groceries, well-paying jobs, first rate healthcare, quality childcare, and – most importantly – equitable access to joy. Every child in Louisville is entitled to parks, pools, basketball courts and libraries. We all know these are the true and undeniable hallmarks of a safe and thriving community.



Louisville Metro Police Department (LMPD) already has plenty of authority and public safety currently accounts for nearly half of our city's budget, yet these problems persist. LMPD does not need more reasons to make arrests (though there are several documented instances of LMPD making arrests without even alleging a crime). Even the best of our law enforcement officials are not equipped to solve every problem our community is experiencing. It is time for a resounding rejection of the status quo. It is time for change.

Sincerely,

Keturah Herron
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