Hello,

I’m a concerned resident that stands with the BIPOC community in demanding the defunding of the Toronto Police Service. I believe the easiest route to defunding is through de-tasking. By creating a mental health task force, perhaps as a subset of EMS, we can delegate mental health calls away from police officers who are (relatively) untrained in handling mental health crises. By decriminalizing drug use, sex work, and homelessness (which, as research has shown, improves the lives and safety of individuals involved in these activities) we can again de-task police officers. With less expectations of police officers, we will require less officers on duty at any given time, and thus, we can defund the department as a whole.

Some individuals, including Mayor John Tory, are requesting de-tasking the police but not specifically defunding. I would like to reiterate that de-tasking must imply defunding. As a taxpayer, it is unacceptable for TPS to maintain its current spending while providing less services to the public. Of course, this may necessitate layoffs within the department, but this is a common reality for many industries as society advances (for example, print newspaper, libraries).

It’s likely that defunding is a long process and won’t eliminate all cases of police brutality. Here are some of my requests for actions that TPS can take immediately:

1. Greater accountability for officers, including consequences for those who tamper with or turn off body cameras. In some cases, body camera footage is crucial evidence against perpetrators of police violence and thus it is unjust to the victims to tamper with such footage.
2. Transparency of spending. Taxpayers deserve to know what they are funding, and moreover, city council must be able to question or justify use of funds.
3. Increased de-escalation training, particularly for those experiencing mental health distress. This needs to be done to decrease the number of deaths at the hands of police until we can form, train, and implement a mental health task force.

I appreciate the time taken to read this message, and I hope to see actionable change in the upcoming year.