

African American Roundtable: Releases statement on joint public budget hearing

Posted on Tuesday, Oct 4, 2022

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

Last night the people of Milwaukee spoke, and the message was clear. Community members want to see the city defund the police in order to expand other city services. Markasa Tucker-Harris, Executive Director of the African American Roundtable said, “Over the last three years, hundreds and hundreds of residents have continued to demand that you defund the police. Will you continue this reckless behavior by walking us down the aisle of bankruptcy, or will you fund libraries, fund the people, and fund our needs?”

This budget calls for the cuts for four libraries and the temporary closing of the Martin Luther King, Jr. branch, which saves just \$2 million dollars, while the police department budget is increasing by \$20 million. Cutting libraries deprives communities of access to literacy support, internet access for people searching for jobs, and spaces for communities to gather. This status quo budget continues the trend of funding police at the expense of every other department and will lead Milwaukee to bankruptcy.

During this budget process, four aldermanic districts are without representation, which means 160,000 residents will not have a voice in this budget. That is why we are demanding participatory budgeting. Ryeshia Farmer, Community Program Manager of the African American Roundtable said, “We’re demanding participatory budgeting to give people decision-making power to improve their lives.”

We ask that all residents join us in our fight to defund the Milwaukee Police Department to fund our libraries, neighborhoods, housing, mental health services and support participatory budgeting.