



Des Moines BLM
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June 8, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

RESIDENTS OF DES MOINES CRY FOR
 ANTI-VIOLENCE ORDINANCE

We would like to begin by thanking local organizers and community members who have committed their time and efforts to the advancement of racial justice in the city they love and call home. However, our elected officials have failed us again. Today, over 1000 of our community members flooded a public Zoom meeting. In the meeting, Des Moines City Council gathered to discuss an anti-racial profiling ordinance that had been set forth only four hours before it would be deliberated on. Originally presented by Iowa CCI over two years ago, a newly updated version was crafted in collaboration with the NAACP and the ACLU of Iowa.

In an attempt to appease recent public pressure, the City Council chose to release a weak ordinance only four hours before the vote. The reality is, this ordinance would effectively work against the goals of Des Moines BLM and other anti-racist organizations.

As a community member pointed out during public commentary:

"It is hard for anyone to admit that they are racist. But when they become a person in power and deliberately weaken legislation that would advance racial justice in their city, they cannot claim to be anti-racist. I would like the City Council to recognize that their inaction shows their true colors... This shouldn't be controversial now or ever."

In addition, this ordinance is missing a community review board, a ban on pretextual stops, and does not make cannabis a low priority. City Council's urgency to pass an anti-racial profiling ordinance resulted in the removal of these critical points. Unsurprisingly, our elected officials have not done enough. In addition to supporting all six points proposed by the Alliance, Des Moines BLM demands that the city reallocate existing funds to fulfill all of these points. Were the City to increase police funding in order to achieve these goals, it would demonstrate a fundamental misunderstanding of the racial equity problem in Des Moines.



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The BLM movement here in Des Moines, and all across the globe, continues to call for the return of power to the people, which goes beyond reform. Power to the people means a world where we use our radical imaginations to create systems that will serve us. Currently, 39% of the City of Des Moines' budget is used for an unjust policing system that condones murder and the disproportionate incarceration of Black and non-Black People of Color. As we move forward, Des Moines BLM continues to call for defunding and the abolishment of police forces in Des Moines. We call for the funding currently devoted to police to be reallocated to field experts who can respond to unique situations in order to truly keep our communities safe. We look to Minneapolis as an example of what it looks like when public servants honor the wishes of the people and make a commitment to dismantle their systems of oppressive racial violence.

We will continue to fight. For the lives of Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, George Floyd and millions of others, we call for power to return to the people so that we can create a sustainable and just form of community-led public safety.

We have seen that broken systems built on centuries of racism cannot be fixed. Instead, we intend to dismantle those systems in order to create a healing space for Black and non-Black People of Color, and return public safety into the hands of the people.

We will defund the DMPD. We will abolish the DMPD. We will heal, we will flourish, and we will celebrate without Des Moines Police in our city. We will continue to organize for holistic and liberatory change. Do not let the thousands who have come out in support for this movement go unnoticed.

Black Lives Matter.