



Mr. Vincent Teacher Example for Pulitzer Center

Investigating U.S Police Budgets



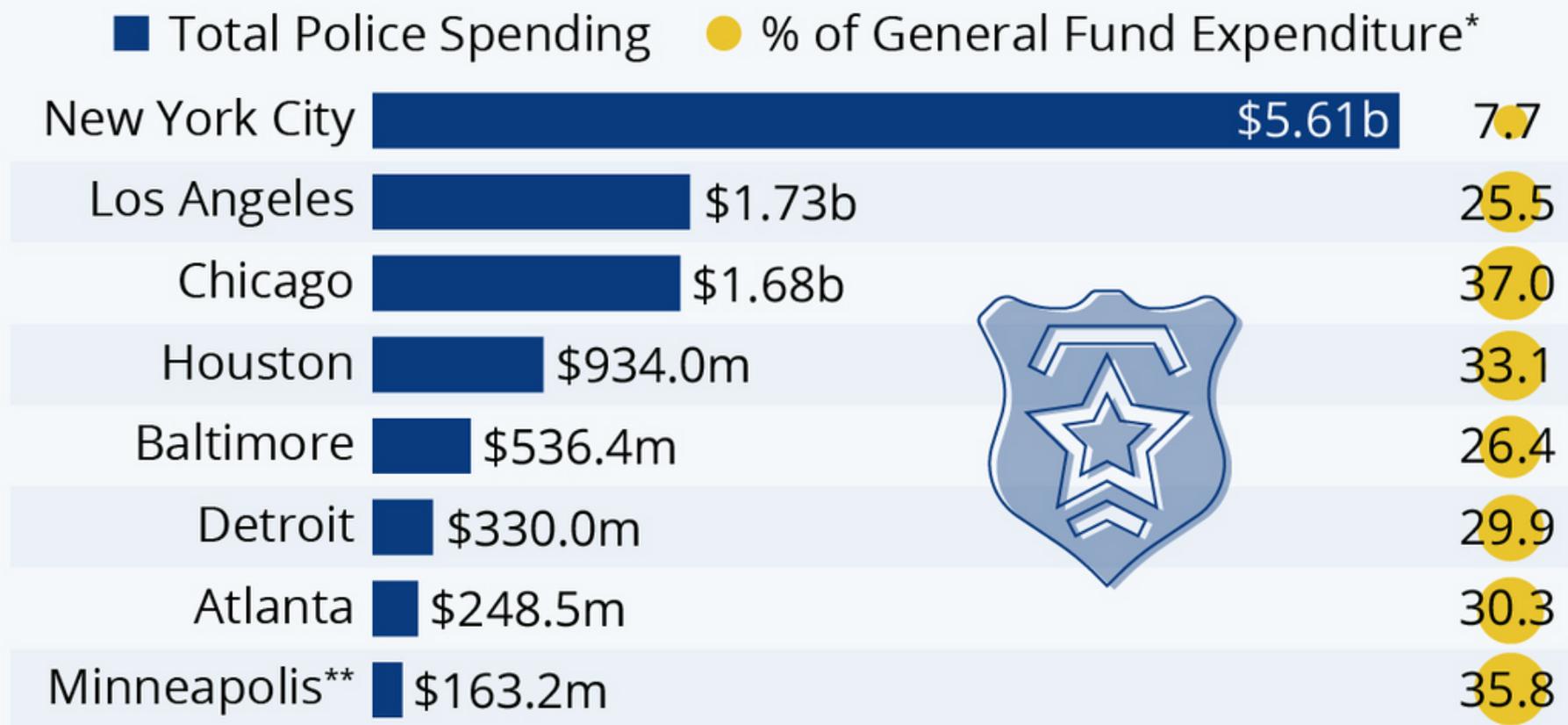
There have been many protests across the United States in 2020 due to police violence. With these increased incidents of police brutality, many advocates are demanding that we "defund the police".

What is the relationship between our government's expenses and police budgets?



How Much Do U.S. Cities Spend On Policing?

Total police budget and share of selected cities' general fund expenditure in 2020



* General fund is used to support city services like police, fire and parks, as well as planning, community development and administrative support services.

** Latest Minneapolis data is from 2017

Sources: The Center for Popular Democracy, Law for Black Lives, Black Youth Project 100

Police expenses account for a significant amount of our government's budget. **Hundreds of millions to billions** of dollars are dedicated to maintaining (and even expanding) police services.

What are notable ways police departments utilize their funding?

Examples of Police Funding gone wrong

Case #1 (Surveillance)

- In May 2020, the Baltimore Police Department started a six month experiment to use camera-equipped planes in order to record potential crime.
- Citizens and organizations protested this program because they argued that these planes would violate a person's right to privacy.



Case #2 (Militarization)

- For the past several decades, police departments around the US increased their usage of military equipment. The police argue that they require resources like military rifles and vehicles to help fight crime.
- Opponents of police militarization claim that militarization of police officers only makes them more dangerous to citizens. People have also presented evidence of police using military resources and tactics to oppress protests.



Case #1: Police Surveillance

APA Citation: CAVANAUGH SIMPSON, J. (2020).
Prying Eyes. Retrieved from
<https://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/prying-eyes>

Main Idea, Evidence, Analysis, Link



One compelling reason why police budgets need to be reduced is that police agencies can use their money to fund unnecessary surveillance projects. According to the article "Prying Eyes" by Joanne Cavanaugh Simpson, the Baltimore Police Department has spent at least \$3.7 million dollars on a plane surveillance program. Every day the spy plane flies over the city of Baltimore and records footage of the people in order to find potential crime. As Simpson describes it, "After more than 700 hours aloft over the city, just one arrest has been made with aid from the program's imagery data, according to Baltimore City Police Department (BPD)." (Simpson 2020). What the text is trying to communicate is by July 2020, which was when the article was written, only 1 arrest was made. We can infer from this information that that the surveillance program is a waste of money, especially since millions have been spent for just one person to be capture by the police. The spy plane's risk of invading people's privacy is higher than the potential to capture criminals. Therefore, we need to decrease police budgets.

Case #2 Militarization

McCartney, A., Murray, P., & Rojanasakul, M. (2020). Police Militarization: 1033, DHS Programs Lead to Billions in Equipment Stockpiling. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2020-police-military-equipment/>

Vox (2020). Why America's police look like soldiers [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOA0VbyfjA0>

Main Idea, Evidence, Analysis, Link

Through the example of police militarization, we can understand how large police budgets are a problem for our society. Since 1997, the Defense of Department has provided "\$7 billion worth of guns, helicopters, armored vehicles and ammunition" (McCartney, Murray, & Rojanasakul, 2020). This quote reveals an incredible amount of resources meant for war are now in the hands of the police. The evidence forces us to consider how things like helicopters and guns is essential to building trust between the community and the police.

Furthermore, having military equipment in the hands of police officers also negatively changes their mentalities. In an interview with Vox media, author and former police officer Arthur Rizer claims "77% of police officers I interviewed said having military equipment makes them more aggressive, more assertive, and it can make them more violent" (Vox). The significance of this information is that the majority of officers can identify how militarization affects their approach. This detail, along with the previous quote, suggests that it is impossible to have the police protect the peace when they are armed for war. Consequently, the militarization of police demonstrates that substantial police budgets are unessential for a peaceful society.

**The role of the police is
to serve the
community, not control
citizens through
surveillance and
military equipment.**

#DEFUNDTHEPOLICE



What does defunding the police look like? Case study: New York City

Source: "The N.Y.P.D Spends \$6 Billion a Year. Proposals to Defund It Want to Cut \$1 Billion" by Ella Koeze and Denise Lu (New York Times June 2020)

City comptroller \$155 million cut per year for four years



\$112 million – Suspend hiring of new police classes to reduce number of uniformed officers by 3 percent.

\$26 million – Cut uniformed overtime by 5 percent.

\$17 million – Cut non-personnel expenses by 4 percent.

In July 2020, the NYC city council had a hearing about NYPD budgets. One proposal from the city comptroller suggested that the NYPD would slowly have some of their budget taken away to pay for other social services. Meanwhile the organization Communities United for Police Reform, an demanded immediate cuts of more than \$1 billion.

As we can see, our society is now having serious conversations about what policing should look like in the United States. We can go further.

Advocacy group More than \$1 billion cut for 2021 fiscal year



\$397 million – Cut overtime, public relations and surveillance technology use, and cap uniformed officers to budgeted amount.

\$287 million – Fire abusive officers, cut modified duty and deduct settlement payouts from the operating budget as a punitive measure.

\$263 million – Freeze new hires, cancel new cadet classes and cancel cadet training program.

\$219 million – Reduce uniformed officers by about 5 percent, to 2014 levels.

\$96 million – Remove officers from schools, transit systems, homeless outreach and mental health response programs.

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Learn more:

- <https://www.changethenypd.org/nycbudgetjustice>
- <https://www.aclu.org/news/criminal-law-reform/defunding-the-police-will-actually-make-us-safer/>