

Divad Durant Testimony
New York City FY25 Preliminary Public Safety Hearing
March 20th, 2024

Good evening, my name is Divad Durant, a leader in the Justice Committee, a grassroots organization committed to ending police violence and systemic racism in New York City.

As a Black man, raised in the South Bronx; one of the poorest congressional districts in the United States, I've experienced the physical and psychological harms of police violence, as well as, the violence of historical disinvestment.

Growing up, my safety was dependent on essential services like youth programs, community centers, and public libraries; institutions and organizations that nurture neighborhoods back to health, not the NYPD.

I was repulsed to learn that the consequences of **Mayor Adams mismanagement of city funds**, and refusal to generate revenue from the rich, leaves low-income **Black, Latinx and other New Yorkers of color stuck with the bill**. The NYPD's FY25 preliminary agency budget is more than \$300M above what the Adams administration proposed for them at this time last year.

Flooding the subways with the national guard and NYPD is a weird flex. When you gut programs that are supposed to support low-income, working class New Yorkers but continue to fund NYPD's already bloated budget you are saying the only solution to deal with poverty in this city is to jail the poor. Despite this tired effort to overpolice New Yorkers, the core problems that generate violence will persist like lack of affordable housing, lack of access to educational resources, lack of resources to travel to and from work, lack of access to food, etc.

Moreover, NYC paid out **\$114.5 Million in police misconduct settlements** last year. This doesn't even include the personnel costs of keeping cops who kill, brutalize and sexually assault on payroll when the NYPD obstructs discipline and refuses to fire cops for half a decade or longer like we've seen in the cases of Ramarley Graham and Eric Garner and like we're seeing in the cases of Kawaski Trawick, Allan Fliz, Delrawn Small, and Ronald Anthony Smith. Despite this, the NYPD is already reported to not face cuts in the upcoming PEGS. .

Clear eyed research supports that real safety is achieved through investments in core infrastructure and services like affordable housing, childcare, healthcare including mental health, and youth programs. We need a City Council and Mayor to prioritize New Yorkers' well-being, over further bloating the police force.

I urge the mayor and city council to stop giving the NYPD preferential treatment and invest in services that all new yorkers need to thrive.