

**From:** [Allison Ewing](#)  
**To:** [Michael Callagy](#); [CMO BoardFeedback](#); [Don Horsley](#); [Carole Groom](#); [Dave Pine](#); [Warren Slocum](#); [David Canepa](#)  
**Subject:** Request to Defund the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office  
**Date:** Monday, March 22, 2021 3:06:05 PM

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Dear County Manager Michael P. Callagy, and Supervisors David Canepa, Carole Groom, Don Horsley, Warren Slocum, and Dave Pine:

My name is Allison Ewing and I am a resident of San Mateo County (SMC). I am reaching out at this critical moment in an effort to support the defunding of the San Mateo County's Sheriff's Office (SMCSO). I WISH THERE HAD BEEN A BETTER/DIFFERENT way to describe this movement, this huge ask, this fundamental shift in how law and order is organized, focused and perceived by the community it serves. It's not defunding the police - you will still have funding of course and when the funding that has been shifted to other meaningful services that will help reduce the need

Funds should be redirected to health and mental health care, education, transit, affordable housing, and COVID-19 relief; providers that have proven to have a positive impact on all residents.

In 2018, after the tasing death of a Black father, Chinedu Okobi, the SMCSO resisted changing its Use of Force Policy, even after prolonged and sustained public outcry. Ongoing violence by law enforcement across the country, evidenced by the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks and recent local law enforcement involved shootings, taser deaths, Sheriff Bolanos' ongoing collaboration with ICE, convince us that our community must shift our funding priorities from law enforcement to those resources that have proven to support the sanctity of human life.

As our County continues to weather the impacts of COVID-19, which has [disproportionately caused more deaths in Black and Latinx communities across the country](#), we are deeply troubled and find unacceptable that the County has chosen to yet again, increase funding of the SMCSO. We are demanding funding of the vital programs that serve a multitude of SMC people such as the Health Department, assistance programs, and other safety-net aid in the county. As highlighted by the [American Public Health Association](#), law enforcement is the public health issue, "...causing deaths, injuries, trauma, and stress that disproportionately affect marginalized populations."

The Sheriff's office already operates with a \$250+ million dollar budget. In May 2020, the County recently approved nearly \$1 million dollars for tasers, and is projected to add \$1 million more to increase wages for the Sheriff's Department. Alarmingly, this increase is being proposed while the County predicts to be in a \$65-100 million dollar deficit because of COVID-19.

Meanwhile, the County's Health Department will barely manage to fill a deficit of \$57 million that it was facing before COVID-19 and expects to lose more revenue later this year from less tax and other revenue in the midst of the pandemic. The [County Manager has stated that](#) "Departments most affected [by the deficit] include safety-net providers needed during the COVID-19 crisis: the Department of Housing, Human Services Agency and County Health and Public Safety, among others. At the same time, demand for county health services, individual and family assistance programs and other safety-net aid is expected to increase costs, according to the county."

I urge the County Manager and Board of Supervisors take the following action this fiscal year by:

1. Divesting \$100 million dollars from the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office and investing said funds in the County's health services, individual & family assistance programs, and other safety-net aid that will benefit the people of SMC and that are predicted to suffer financial loss due to COVID-19.
2. Discontinue use of General Fund monies to pay for settlements due to murder, misconduct, and negligence by the Sheriff's office.

With deep thanks for your consideration  
Allison Ewing

P.S I borrowed the words of my neighbor but it doesn't make them any less important to me.