

Alexandria Commission on Aging Executive Committee (COA ExCo)
Narrative Testimony for the Budget Public Hearing on March 8, 2021

Good evening Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Bennett - Parker and members of City Council. I am Barbara "Babs" Waters, Chair, Commission on Aging, and I am here to present testimony from the Commission's Executive Committee.

We thank you for your many years of unwavering support for older residents in Alexandria.

We also thank the Office of Management and Budget staff for their presentation of the City Manager's Proposed FY 2022 Budget to the COA's Advocacy Committee recently.

Based on the information provided, the COA's Executive Committee asks that additional funds be allotted to upgrade the Senior Workforce Development Training Specialist from half-time to full time to meet greater demands from job seekers who are 50+. The full-time position will increase the budget by \$47,000. The Work Force Development Center (WDC) lost 3 part time employees to other jurisdictions where they found full time employment after short periods of employment in Alexandria. This chronic turnover of personnel creates unnecessary interruptions to the WDC program. Currently, a fourth part-time person occupies the position.

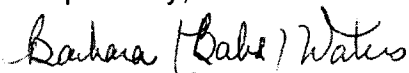
The goal of the WDC is to serve 175 older clients this fiscal year. As of March 03, 2021, there have been twelve (12) total workshops where 102 clients have been served during these extraordinary times due to the COVID -19 Pandemic. As a result, this necessitated all training workshops be conducted remotely via Zoom. Many innovative programs have been implemented to enhance the success of older job seekers - one such program is the Seniors Rapid Reskilling Cohort that provides those 50+ an opportunity to find their best suited employment with job readiness essentials such as Federal workshops, mock interviews, Resume building and entrepreneurship. The WDC continues to partner with AARP. A City of Alexandria certificate recognizing senior residents new foundational employment readiness is awarded to each senior resident upon completion of the program.

The number of clients served are as follows: (1) in the 70-age range the number served is 7; (2) in the 55-69 age range the number served is 18; (3) in the 50 -64 category, the number is 24; (4) in the 50 -59 it is 26; (5) and in the 50 -54 age group the number served is 27. Older adults who have already retired need to supplement their retirement income so they can continue to afford to reside in Alexandria. Additionally, those who lost their employment due to the pandemic or ageism need reskilling to be competitive in the new normal. Furthermore, an integral component to older workers' employment, whether full or part time is additional spending and money circulation in the City which benefits the economy. Simply put, if older residents are able to live, work, play and spend in Alexandria - everyone benefits. Likewise, the COA's Executive Committee has reason to believe that older residents bring wisdom and added value that is manifested in many other different ways to their respective neighborhoods as well as to the City overall.

Finally, we respectfully request your continued commitment to upholding the legacy of Alexandria as an Age Friendly City in which the full-time Workforce Development position is funded to serve older residents in Alexandria.

Subject to your questions, this concludes my presentation.

Respectfully,



Barbara (Babs) H. Waters
Chair, Commission on Aging

Testimony at City Council

My name is Susan Keightley and I am the Director of Program at the Child and Family Network Centers, serving families and children in the City of Alexandria with free preschool, family support, and medical screening for over 35 years.

I am in favor of the budget to expand early education and child care programs in the City. Covid-19 has revealed the importance of the early education and childcare sector as a foundational piece of our economy. While the state has promised to increase funding, the city must return to pre-covid intention of increasing funding for early childhood. Even at the increased levels, state and local funds will fall short of the true cost of early care and education in this region.

This sector is at the intersection of a continuous current economy and the investment in our future workforce. This investment goes beyond the academic skills of a future workforce but has expanded into a social emotional foundation that many of our current children have lost due to the seclusion of the Covid environment. Professionals in early care are preparing for a tsunami of child stress in September when children leave their families for the first time in their young memories. With an increase of stress, the brain of a young child does not have the ability to connect need ideas such as pre-reading and pre-math skills. With consistent early childhood funding, early education and child care programs can invest in the skills and support of the caring adults. Supportive adults and physical settings have been proven to increase the school readiness of all children. (Harvard Early Learning Study)

A return to pre-Covid investment in early childhood is an equitable and necessary to support our current economy and future workforce. I am happy to answer any questions.

Mayor, Vice Mayor, and City Council,

My name is Jonathan Krall. I am a member of Grassroots Alexandria and Livable Alexandria, but today I am speaking only for myself.

There are three issues of concern for me in the budget. Police in schools, racial inequity in policing, and affordable housing.

Let's begin with police in schools, which is basically a half-million dollar "rah rah" outreach program to get students to like police. ACPS surveys show that a significant number of students, over 25%, are simply are not buying it. Data from other school systems show that police in schools are associated with racial inequities in suspensions and in arrests of students by police. ACPS data shows severe racial inequities in both suspensions and arrests. Our racial equity initiative requires us to take positive steps.

As it stands, police in schools are leading school programs, such as sports, that could be better led by people actually trained to work with students. These officers are in the police budget, but they benefit schools. That motivates both of these large departments to keep the status quo. Only City Council can come up with a win-win solution for public safety and for schools by moving school resource officer funding over to the school budget. It's on you to fix this.

Now onto racial inequity in policing. APD data shows that our police excessively stop and fine Black people relative to White people by nearly 2 to 1. This is another racial equity issue. Please write into the budget that these excess fines and fees will be returned.

Now onto affordable housing. We are facing a sky-high housing market alongside sky-high unemployment. Business as usual is not appropriate. The divide between haves and have nots is skyrocketing. I am one of the haves. We need to be taking money from people like me and spending it on the normal working people who serve our community. Perhaps we are doing this already, but we need to do more. We need more housing. We need density. We need dense housing near transit.

I request the following:

- Please require every new development to have at least 30% of new units be affordable at 40% of the area median income (AMI) or below
- Require that "bonus density" be at the 40% AMI level or below
- Require all future developments seeking special use permits or increased density to provide a displacement analysis. This is another racial equity issue
- Please increase the affordable housing set-aside from the current 1/2 penny per \$1,000 of assessed property value to a full penny
- Please speed up the development of alternatives to driving. Bike lanes are very inexpensive.

I thank you for your time and attention.

Jonathan Krall
Alexandria, VA 22301

PRESENTATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL

March 8, 2021

Mayor Wilson, Vice-Mayor Bennett-Parker, Members of the City Council:

My name is Charles Ziegler, Director for Advocacy, Friends of the Beatley Central Library. The budget proposed by City Manager Jinks has dealt astutely with Alexandria Library in terms of funding. This was a wise decision. During these difficult times, our public libraries have demonstrated their worth in many ways, even when they have had to close their doors due to pandemic restrictions. Indeed, one could argue that our public libraries become even *more* important to the life of our community during challenging times:

- They have supported families during “stay at home” orders by providing hundreds of virtual programs.
- Established curbside services to provide access to hard-copy materials.
- Expanded availability to use databases, e-books, and e-audiobooks to all users, assisted by \$100,000 CARES funds provided by the City Council.
- Purchase the program *Tutor.com* to assist families with virtual learning.

We are also mindful that the City Council has done much to support our public libraries, such as:

- Funding over \$1 million in repairs to mitigate water infiltration at the Beatley Central Library
- Funding the installation of security cameras to improve safety, both in and around library facilities.
- Funding a portion of technology upgrades to allow purchase of the Digital Asset Management System to begin the library digitizing project.

Despite this good news, I would be remiss if I did not call attention to shortcomings to be remedied:

- The materials budget for our public libraries has declined over the past ten years, so that Alexandria has one of the lowest materials expenditures among other Council of Government Libraries.

-Library technology that is approaching the end of its life cycle, including the Integrated Library System, must be updated.

-A Facility Assessment is badly needed to ensure library services that can meet the needs of a growing Alexandria.

We understand that there are many legitimate calls on the city budget, and not all needs can always be funded. But we ask that in assessing the budget allocation to be accorded to our public libraries, Council members bear in mind that our library resources are available to and can benefit ALL Alexandrians.

Thank you.

March 8, 2021

Via Email and Upload

Alexandria City Council
c/o Gloria Sitton, City Clerk
301 King Street, Room 2300
Alexandria, VA 22314
gloria.sitton@alexandriava.gov

**Re: Public Comment for Alexandria Virtual Budget Public Hearing in Support of
*Tenants and Workers United Police-Free Schools Campaign***

Good Evening Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker, and Alexandria City Council Members:

My name is Ashley R. Moore. I am an attorney with the Legal Aid Justice Center's Youth Justice Program. I am here on behalf of youth from Tenants and Workers United (TWU) and speak in solidarity with their student-led police-free schools campaign in Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). They have been working for supportive, restorative, equitable, and just ACPS policies, practices, and programs for years. Now is the time to take transformative action, especially as schools begin to reopen even as the devastating COVID-19 pandemic continues.

I urge you to listen to the youth regarding the fiscal year 2022 budget. As leaders have stated: "A budget is a moral document." It reflects values, including what is important and who matters. To that end, we thank you for the proposed increased investment in K-12 education, which would better equip ACPS to achieve its "Equity for All" strategic goal. However, we ask you to please *divest* from the Alexandria Police Department's School Resource Unit budget and *invest* in children's academic, social, and emotional health and well-being instead.

In recent years, Alexandria City Councilmembers have awarded over \$650,000 to the Alexandria Police Department to fund school resource officers (SROs) stationed at schools. Records from 2019-2020 reveal that the police department actually spent over \$172,000 more than the budgeted amount for a total of \$868,529 or 24% more than the police department was allotted.

Many students, families, and allies in the City of Alexandria do not want to see any more investment in the police department, school pushout, and criminalization of children, rather they want to see that money re-invested in school support staff; inclusionary academic, social, and emotional learning programs; and beneficial services to help them thrive as students in the classroom and beyond. Why? Because too many students, especially black and brown children of color, have been dealt with too harshly, over-policed, and thrust into the school-to-prison pipeline to experience a cascade of collateral consequences stemming from system involvement.

During the 2019-2020 school year, students of color were disproportionately referred to law enforcement in 57 instances:

- 23 referrals to law enforcement were for Black students,
- 25 were for Hispanic students, and
- 9 were for white students.

Importantly, of the 18 students who received a suspension for fighting without injury, the *only one who was referred to law enforcement was a Black female student*.

Disparate treatment based on race and gender is all too common in policed spaces and has no place in the Alexandria community, especially not in schools which should be supportive.

You must disinvest from school police. To do so adheres with Alexandria City Council Resolution No. 2974, adopted January 23, 2021, which addresses “All Alexandria” as “Committing to Race and Social Equity.” The Resolution states that the City Council will “[r]educ[e] and eliminate racial and social inequities in the allocation of City resources through the use of a budget equity tool which may entail adjustment of budgets and funding reallocation... to advance the City’s racial equity goals informed by additional community engagement[.]”

Thus, the Alexandria Police Department’s School Resource Unit should not be funded. As councilmembers, you have the authority. Ending the funding for school police would uplift students, especially youth of color, and help to create a stronger pipeline to college and career. Other city councils across the nation have taken such action to disinvest in police and re-invest the funds in ways to strengthen children, youth, and families in the community.

We should listen to the youth pleading for holistic support and prioritize their needs to ensure their success as students and vital members of Alexandria, especially in the wake of COVID-19.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and ensuring educational equity for all ACPS youth!

Good Afternoon Mayor and City council Members,

I am Sindy Carballo, a former ACPS student, class of 2020 and currently a youth organizer at Tenants and Workers United.

I want to emphasize that your leadership and role as elected officials in the city is crucial. Every decision made impacts our communities but now more than ever, we need you to take the right actions for the futures of our youth -- the leaders of tomorrow -- as they are demanding for the changes they deserve in their schools.

The current School Resource Officer Program in our middle and high schools is not equitable. If we want to see the city of Alexandria as a progressive city, we need to take a look at how systems are set and combat those things setting our students of color back from success. Providing them with the tools they need and not providing with barriers.

We have been policing our students in ACPS schools since 1997, that is exactly 23 years ago. We acknowledge that things have changed and that the school board made changes in their current MOU agreement with the Alexandria police department but we fail to see anything that determines how armed personnel in the school benefit our students, especially our black and hispanic students. There is no data.

We hear about the SRO's having an after soccer program with 30-40 students of the international academy but that does not represent that whole student body and how they feel or interact with the officers. Police officers can always play soccer with students. Not everyone in the school is able to relate or speak on behalf of the benefits this program provides to them because it is not necessarily applicable to them. ACPS or APD can continue to have this program and have these students involved but that does not require for the SRO presence at school every single day.

Although there are changes in the current MOU, the police presence in the buildings makes it likely for a student to be referred to them. Teachers, administrators or staff use these resources as a way to threaten students for minor behavioral things when they aren't supposed to get involved. What's more concerning is that these sorts of situations aren't even tracked.

It's disappointing that our youth are voicing for changes that impact their learning, asking for more support so they can succeed or to help their communities especially during these times and are not being heard by the people that are supposed to represent them. Instead we are spending nearly a million dollars to surveille, control and terrorize their learning environments. Our youth are the experts on their own experiences and how they feel around school officers, I know I certainly did not in any shape or form feel comfortable around them. They are still cops referenced with a different term.

It is time for you (our Mayor and City council to re-allocate this funding)

Thank you for taking the time to listen to our concerns and hope that we are not left with promises but with the changes our future leaders need.

Good Evening Mayor and City Council Members,

My name is Karen an 8th grader at Hammond Middle School and a youth member of Tenants and Workers United.

I have always been against police in schools from the start because they always made me feel uncomfortable and always on high alert because I felt threatened by their existence.

As a Black youth with a different perspective of cops, I honestly thought they would be nice as I have seen in movies but they are completely the opposite. They are always just lurking in the hallways with no purpose or mission, they get involved with nothing that has to do with them or a problem that the higher-ups can deal with.

SRO's have a lot of influence on whether a student will be disciplined or not as the data shows. This program costs a lot of money and that money can be put to better use like housing, mutual aid, health access for families who fear seeking medical care because they do not have the money.

In conclusion, I still think having SRO's in schools is not a good idea, and even though the MOU was renewed by ACPS, we know you have the power to determine whether or not they should be there. Again, I hope you take my thoughts into consideration when you look at the budget and think twice about what is best for the community.

Thank you

Hello Mayor and City Council Members,

It is a pleasure to be here.

My name is Fatimah Yasir Hameed and I am a 15 year old sophomore at TC. I am here today with tenants and workers United to discuss this issue that impacts me and many of our students.

First of all, I would like you all to ask yourselves and answer with all honesty, what are the reasons to keep funding police in our schools to begin with, even while knowing how controversial the subject is and how many parents, students, staff members and city council members are unhappy and dissatisfied with it? Why do we continue to fund the police? Even though we already have a lot of safety precautions such as security cameras and most importantly security guards, who do an incredible job with keeping our schools organized and safe.

As a student of Alexandria city public schools and a person who has experience in many volunteer activities and research papers about how police impact the school system, I, alongside many members of our community, believe that with police officers inside school buildings, students and staff are feeling distressed and not safe.

As a sister of a student currently enrolled in Acps, and as an acps student and a POC myself, I am extremely uncomfortable and scared for me and my little brother's life with police on campus. And I am certain that i am not the only one, and that is why we are here; to help represent those who are unable to represent themselves.

Do not misunderstand, keeping schools safe is an important task, and of course not everyone is safe to be around, however how do you see this issue evolving?

Do we, as a community, plan to continue paying thousands of dollars towards police funding even though most days they are not needed inside of the school campus? Do we plan to keep parents and staff members worried and students distracted from learning.

That money provided for the police funding could very well be used to side the community in many different cases and resources for us students and our families.

We need to figure out a solution so that the students can feel safe and undistracted, the schools can stay safe, and that representatives can feel accomplished with the choices that they made.

I hope you make the right decision during this budget season. Thank you.

Good Evening Mayor and City Council Members,

My name is Teofila Gomez and I'm a mom of 3 boys children, 1st & 3rd grade at Mt. Vernon and a 7th grader at George Washington middle school.

I am also part of the parents group of Tenants and Workers United.

I'm here today as a mother who is in support of our youth. You as city council - are the ones who are allowed to place funds into allowing police in our schools. You are the ones that are allowing the continuance of this funding . If we truly want a positive school climate and believe in equity in our school system, then we also should know that police in school is not part of that.

That is why all of those resources used in that program should be better utilized to support the families most in need during the pandemic.

Every year we invest more in the criminalization of our youth instead of other resources that are most necessary. In Alexandria, we always talk about how unique we are and how we are better off than other neighboring cities and counties. Today is the moment that you all who are in power of leadership think more of the community and the students and not their criminalization. It's times to change our politics that truly impact our students and be more creative when we think of improving our school climate in our school system.

Very soon you will be making the decision and I would just like to say lastly that please remember our children are not in a jail and they are not criminals and it's time to place police where that should be and let our school system work with the schools

Thank you for giving me the chance to speak

Buenas Tardes Miembros al Alcalde y miembros del concejo.

Mi nombre es Teófila Gómez y soy una mamá de 3 niños , primer y tercer grado de la escuela Mt Vernon y otro en el grado 7 que va a la George Washington.

También pertenezco al grupo de padres de Inquilinos y Trabajadores Unidos.

Yo estoy aquí en apoyo a nuestros jóvenes y como madre de familia. Les pido a ustedes como miembro del concejal de la ciudad - que son ustedes quienes aportan estos fondos que permite tener policías en nuestras escuelas. Los fondos para mantener a los policías están en su presupuesto. Y si creemos en un buen ambiente escolar y creemos en la educación equitativa , entonces sabemos que tener policías en nuestras escuelas no es parte de eso.

Por eso todos esos recursos invertidos en policias deberian ser utilizados para apoyar a las familias más necesitadas durante esta pandemia

Cada año se invierte más en criminalizar a nuestros estudiantes en vez de recursos que si es necesario. En Alexandria siempre hablamos de que somos diferentes y de que estamos mejor que otros condados y ciudades vecinas, hoy es el momento que ustedes en el poder de liderazgo piensen más en la voz de la comunidad y los estudiantes y no en la criminalización, es hora de cambiar políticas que afectan a nuestros estudiantes y ser creativos para mejorar el clima de aprendizaje en nuestras escuelas.

Muy pronto estarán ustedes tomando una decisión solo me gustaría recordarles que nuestras escuelas no son cárceles, que nuestros niños no son criminales y que es hora que la policía esté donde tiene que estar y que nuestro sistema educativo haga su trabajo en las escuelas.

Gracias por darme la oportunidad de hablar

Good evening mayor and city council members,

My name is Olga Moncado and i've lived in alexandria for 7 years

I live in chirlahia with my husband and son in an efficient place where I pay 1,265 a month in rent.

I'm here as a resident of the city asking you to make the right decision when it comes to the budget, many of us have been hit by the hard reality where we have to work 2-3 jobs in order to survive to afford to live in the city.

Covid has destroyed us , it has impacted our health , job and even our homes.

This is the opportunity to truly support us and ensure the appropriate funds will be used to create more affordable housing in the city.

We know there will be a lot of development coming soon to our neighborhood and that gives us hope we will one day live in those affordable homes.

We hope you can assign more funding into affordable housing

We count on your leadership and your support and also to ensure that the chirilagua development will not be a displacement for my family but that it will be an opportunity for us to continue to live here - as for far too long we have suffered from the lack of enough actions being taken to priority affordable housing in the city.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak

Buenas Tardes Alcalde y miembros del consejo, .

Mi nombre es Olga Moncado y he vivido en Alexandria por 7 años .

Yo vivo en chirilagua con mi esposo y hijo en un efficiency donde pago 1,265 al mes.

Estoy aquí como residente de esta ciudad pidiendo a ustedes que tomen buenas decisiones sobre este presupuesto, muchos de nosotros hemos vivido durante años la dura realidad que es tener 2 o 3 trabajos para poder sobrevivir en esta ciudad.

COVID nos ha destruido, nos ha impactado nuestra salud, la de nuestros seres queridos, nuestro trabajo y hogar.

Esta es su oportunidad para en verdad apoyarnos y asegurar que hay fondos apropiados para crear más vivienda a bajo costo.

Sabemos que habrá mucho desarrollo en nuestra vecindad y nos da la esperanza de poder vivir en vivienda a bajo costo.

Esperamos ver más dinero asignado en este presupuesto para vivienda a bajo costo.

Esperamos contar con su liderazgo y su apoyo para asegurar que desarrollos como el de Chirilagua no sean un desplazamiento para familias como la mía sino que sea una oportunidad para todos nosotros que vivimos aquí y que estamos sufriendo el impacto por años de la falta de acciones y prioridades en esta ciudad.

Muchas gracias por darme la oportunidad de expresarme hoy.

Good evening Mayor and city council members,

My name is Alessandra, and I am an ACPS student in the 9th grade and youth member at Tenants and Workers United. As leaders in this city, you all hold the power to take action and place the funding from the School Resource Officer program in our schools into something that will actually benefit our communities, families, and lives.

In school, we have SRO's who constantly watch over us, and that makes me feel uncomfortable as if I have done something wrong. There isn't a need to have police officers in a place where I'm supposed to be learning and feeling safe. So why is there a need to have police watching over us? As if we were up to no good?

We can invest this money to help our community with resources such as affordable housing, rent relief and health access for our families . Something that we actually need. In my neighborhood, I'm seeing that we are struggling with money to pay rent because we can't work right now, or don't earn enough money to live here. We are barely making it, and we are also spending money on other essential things.

The funding for the SRO program in our schools doesn't benefit me or my peers as it only helps to target us, students of color. I see that the Sros mainly get involved in little things such as distractions or bad behavior in class. That brings down the opportunities we have and discourages us to continue wanting to learn .

As the youth group of tenants and workers united, we met with most of you all two times and got to express our experiences as students around SROs, I didn't feel like I was heard enough or our experiences were validated as youth

So again, thank you for the opportunity to hear me out. I hope you really take into consideration my experiences as a student in this city when making decisions that will impact my peers and me.

Hello mayor and city council,

My name is Ingrid and I am a sophomore at TC Williams High school and a youth member at Tenants and Workers United. When I would attend school in person, I would notice we'd always have more than 1 police officer in and out of our school. I don't think we need to have their presence in schools because;

1. we have security officers, school monitors, surveillance cameras and other technology resources ACPS is investing in
2. they are carrying a gun around children and this makes students really uncomfortable
- 3 You are spending money on a program that really doesn't have a purpose

What's the whole point of having police officers when we already have security officers, school administrators and surveillance cameras?

As a student, I feel very uncomfortable around the officers in my school. There was an instance that a gun was discharged and that could have turned into a worse situation. It is not acceptable to feel this way in so called safe place.

The funding for the School Resource officers program could really benefit on other issues that really are impacting our families during the pandemic. A lot of families in my community have lost their jobs and don't have a steady income. We should invest in resources such as more food programs and rent relief that would help students and their families.

As members of city council, you guys have the power to choose where to invest the money and know how to help our community out. We need you to take action because our community really needs your support and the SROs in our schools are not needed.

I hope you can make the right decisions for me and my peers and ensure we are in a safe school climate.

Thank you .

Good evening Mayor and City Council members

My name is Abenaa, I am here today as a Tenants and Worker United youth and ACPS student in 9th grade. We want to urge for the reallocation of funding for the SRO program in our Middle School and high schools.

As a student, I feel uncomfortable with their presence in my school environment. The purpose of school is to learn and succeed. How is it that if I am supposed to learn when I'm constantly being distracted by an armed adult? Isn't school supposed to be my safe place? Our schools are investing thousands and thousands of dollars towards security guards and technology to improve cameras to surveil students, why is it that we still need SRO presence? to intimidate us?

If ACPS is investing so much money into surveilling students, why do we need the City Council to invest more to surveil us through having cops in our schools?

Before the School Board voted in favor of the MOU, we met with many of you and you told us that it was the school board's decision. Now it is your decision how you will use these funds.

As a Black youth and resident in the city, I truly hope you take on your leadership and make the right decision because we, as young people learn from you, our leaders and so we can be proud of you for your right choices

We have stated that funding should be put towards access to health and affordable housing due to this pandemic since it's taking a massive toll on our parents' jobs and that some students have chosen to remain virtual for the rest of this school year

Thank you for taking the time to listen to me and my peers. I hope you can support us by building a more inclusive and culturally responsive community for us as young people of color and reallocate funds to community-based resources as funding cops in our school is not the solution.

Thank you again.

Good Evening Mayor and City Council Members,

My name is Ingris Moran, Lead Organizer of Tenants and Workers United. I am also a life long resident in the city and have been in Arlandria all of my life. Growing up, my parents each had more than 1 full time job. We always struggled to make ends meet because the cost of rent increases faster than wages. And it is disappointing to me that many families in the same neighborhood I grew up in are still facing the same issue.

My community has seen massive changes, and we all continue to experience this housing crisis. This is not new, but COVID has made these long-standing issues much more obvious. Housing is a social determinant of health, and sustainable action is long overdue. TWU members and people all over Alexandria are looking to you for leadership and solutions that will keep people in their homes and literally save lives.

Historically and often today, City Council fails to consider our community or fails to consult with our Black and Brown communities before they make decisions that impact our lives.

For example, Alexandria Housing Development Corporation has an upcoming development in the next few years in Arlandria. We are very concerned about the lack of effort to ensure the project will include enough affordable housing at 40%AMI for the families that live in Arlandria. We are bringing this to your attention because this all has to do with your priorities and City funding for affordable housing.

We know there is funding allocated to affordable housing But let's ask ourselves if this is truly enough ?

If we want to have an equitable city that provides opportunities for everyone, including the working class and people of color in the city - you as leaders will have to take action to ensure everyone can afford to live here

I am here speaking on behalf of our community members that have been impacted by covid-19, many of whom have lost their homes, their jobs, and even their loved ones.

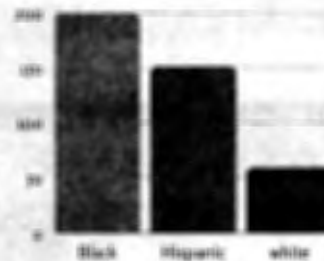
That is why today I'm here before you to discuss the city's budget, which should reflect all of our values and priorities. There are many ways to preserve affordable housing and we appreciate that you have been making an effort. But your efforts will not rise to meet the need unless there is enough funding dedicated to affordable housing. For example, we need you to take bold steps such as increasing the current six-tenths of a penny per \$1,000 of assessed property value to a full penny.

Remember, your decision-making is what will show us if you are taking the right steps to ensure equity in the city, or if you are continuing to leave my community behind

ACPS NEEDS POLICE-FREE SCHOOLS

DURING THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR,

ACPS students were suspended, yet the rate at which students of color were suspended was disproportionate to that of their white peers.



57

ACPS students out of the 409 suspended were referred to law enforcement, 23 referrals to law enforcement were for Hispanic students, 23 referrals were for Black students. Only 9 referrals were for white students.

instances of suspension were based on the use of an e-cigarette. Only 1 was referred to law enforcement—a Hispanic male student.



18

ACPS students received a suspension for fighting that resulted in no injuries. The only one who was referred to law enforcement was a Black female student.

VISIT TWU'S WEBSITE AT
[HTTPS://WWW.TENANTSANDWORKERS.ORG/](https://www.tenantsandworkers.org/)
TO JOIN TWU YOUTH FIGHTING FOR POLICE
FREE SCHOOLS IN ACPS



Tenants and
Workers United