



Minneapolis City Council “Regrets” Pledge to Defund Police

As support for the Black Lives matter movement continues to [decline](#), Minneapolis City Council members are now saying they “regret” their pledge to defund police after their plan to do so has collapsed.

In the aftermath of the May 25 in-custody death of George Floyd, which has since been [determined](#) to have likely been caused by a fatal level of fentanyl and several preexisting health conditions, the Minneapolis City Council pledged on June 7 to defund the city’s police department.

At the time, City Council President Lisa Bender said she envisioned “a transformative new model of public safety.” She [scoffed](#) at safety concerns voiced by residents opposed to a lack of law enforcement and said those citizens were speaking from a place of “privilege.”

Gian Lorenzo Ferrretti Photography/iStock/Getty Images Plus

Bender even taunted her fellow City Council members over whether they would change their position within a few months.

“If you are a comfortable white person asking to dismantle the police I invite you to reflect: are you willing to stick with it? Will you be calling in three months to ask about garage break-ins? Are you willing to dismantle white supremacy in all systems, including a new system?” she pondered.

In July, the council took steps toward dismantling the place by approving an amendment to remove \$1 million from the police department’s budget and using it to hire “violence interrupters,” who were supposed to defuse violent situations.

At the same time, approximately 100 police officers have left the department or have taken a leave of absence this year, more than double the typical amount of officers who become inactive, Minnesota Public Radio reports.

But, as predicted by Bender, almost exactly three months after taking the pledge, council members, including Bender, are now backtracking on their pledges, as area residents are voicing concerns over the lack of police in the community.

“Residents are asking, ‘Where are the police?’” said Council member Jamal Osman, who added that calls to the Minneapolis Police Department have not been answered, Fox News reported. “That is the only public safety option they have seen at the moment. MPD. They rely on MPD. And they are saying they are nowhere to be seen.”

Minneapolis Councilor Andrew Johnson, who had supported the pledge in June, now claims his words



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on September 29, 2020

were intended “in spirit.” Another council member, Phillipe Cunningham, claimed the pledge language was “up for interpretation,” the *New York Times* reports.

Months after Bender told CNN’s *New Day* that she stood by her “bold statement” to dismantle the police department, she told the *Times*, “I think our pledge created confusion in the community and in our wards.”

The *New York Times* observes the change in policy corresponds to a decline in support for Black Lives Matter. The Daily Wire contends the declining support is likely the result of an “unprecedented spike in violent crime” in the city.

The Minneapolis *Star Tribune* wrote of the spike,

At least 275 people have been victims of gunfire in Minneapolis so far this year, eclipsing the entire annual totals of all but two of the past 10 years, according to Police Department records.

Gun violence tends to spike in the city every year during the hot summer months, but this year’s surge in shootings dating back to the unrest after the death of George Floyd is worse than usual.

MPD records show that 269 people were shot in Minneapolis in all of 2019 — a grim milestone that the city reached on July 20 this year. The shooting tally is also nearly 60% higher than the five-year average for this time of the year, records show.

By August, a *Star Tribune*/MPR News/KARE 11 Minnesota [poll](#) found that a plurality of residents, 44 percent, did not support reducing the size of the police force, while 40 percent continued to back the idea. Among black residents, the opposition was even larger, with 50 percent opposed to cutting police officers and 35 percent continuing to support rerouting police funding to social-service programs.

Not all City Council members were on board with the pledge to dismantle the police in the first place. Linea Palmisano refused to take the pledge in a text message later obtained by the *New York Times*.

“I’m not taking any pledge, if that means people throw bottles at me then fine,” she wrote in her text.

Palmisano seems to indicate she never took the Council’s pledge seriously, asserting the council has “gotten used to these kinds of progressive purity tests.”

The *New York Times* sympathetically described the collapse of the city’s pledge as a “case study in how idealistic calls for structural change can falter,” but Ed Morrissey of Hot Air contends the collapse is actually “another reminder that sloganeering doesn’t replace actual governance.”



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