

From: [Zac Delventhal](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [#CI-StPaul_Ward4](#)
Subject: Testimony for 12/2 St. Paul Budget Hearing
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My name is Zac Delventhal, I am a resident of Ward 4 in Saint Paul, concerned about the future of public safety in our community.

While there will probably always be some need for a small number of police, our system of modern policing is broken. We need to rethink how we keep our community safe, and that process must start today with this budget.

My personal experience with the police has been fairly typical. In many ways I've gotten off easy. Some harassment in my youth. A handful of shady officers seemingly self-dealing. Various unnecessarily aggressive traffic stops. But I find even just the relatively minor bullying and harassment that most of us have personally experienced stunning. It is stunning that we consider such behavior normal or necessary. It is stunning that we pay hundreds of millions of dollars to maintain and support such behavior.

And then I think of Mike Brown. And Tamir Rice. And Philando. And Justine. And George. Slowly but surely the insanity of this system has become undeniable to me. We go through our day to day lives subject to the whims of half-cocked fear-addicts armed to the teeth. I used to ride the Green Line to work. Every time my fare was checked I stared at the gun. I wondered what happens if I flinch the wrong way.

This is not normal. This is not necessary. I know policing is a challenging and contentious issue, but it is past time to shift our focus away from armed police and to community first public safety. We must begin investing today in programs that heal our community and prevent the need for police involvement in the first place.

If safety must be maintained at gunpoint then we have already failed.