



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Black-Led Abolitionist Group Announces Boycott
City Council Votes for More Police and Inadequate Funding for Public Services

Bakersfield, CA (May 1, 2021) - Today, the Bakersfield City Council voted unanimously to add increased funding for the Bakersfield Police Department while not providing adequate funding for public services. In response, the People's Budget Bakersfield, a large group of Bakersfield residents led by Black organizers in the fight for the abolition of any and all oppressive structures and collective liberation for our communities, have launched a boycott of numerous prominent businesses that are directly tied to Bakersfield City Council Members.

In 2020, with the help of the community, People's Budget Bakersfield put out the call to Defund BPD by creating a comprehensive city budget that took money from the Bakersfield Police Department and redistributed it to public services that would make our community a safer place to live, just as we did again this year. Our methodology has been simple: educate Bakersfield taxpayers on the budget and ask them where they would want the money distributed. Their responses showed there were [7 key areas](#) where they wanted funding to go, instead of the police: 1. Violence Prevention (Non-policing) 2. Youth Development and Education (including Black-Centered Education) 3. Public Health and Mental Health 4. City Racial Equity Policies and Plans 5. Affordable Housing and Homeless Services 6. Building Black Economic Equity Programs 7. City Reparations to Black and Indigenous Communities.

We completed this work, a [participatory budgeting process](#), free of charge. Meanwhile, Christian Clegg, Bakersfield City Manager has said this would be "too heavy of a lift for the city." However, the People's Budget Bakersfield has offered its numerous supporters to set up the participatory budgeting process for the city. The city has still not agreed to implement it. The bare minimum for any community after paying millions of dollars in taxes is allowing them to have a say in how the taxpayer money is spent.

After more than a year has passed and city decisionmakers have continued to fail taxpayers, we are demanding they be held accountable. Tonight's vote has shown that every single City Council member is complicit in the harm that our most underserved communities face. We call for Bakersfield residents to boycott these local businesses that are directly tied to the Bakersfield City Council:

- Cafe Smitten: Bob Smith
- Sage Equities: Bob Smith
- Hardaway Axume Weir CPAs, LLP: Ken Weir
- C&D Amusements: Chris Parlier
- DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen: Patty Gray
- Nixtamal Cafe: Andrae Gonzalez

Below, members of the People's Budget Bakersfield offer some statements regarding the vote tonight and the boycott announcement:

“Bakersfield City Council directly profits from continuing to vote for budgets that do not fund our public services. They line their pockets by exploiting Black and Brown people. We will now showcase the failures of local businesses to actually support their communities. Businesses tied to oppressors on the Bakersfield City Council that refuse to support investing in our communities by defunding the overbloated police budget for an inherently racist and white supremacist agency are put on notice. The fight to abolish white supremacy has been brought to their doorstep, it is now up to them to either join the fight or continue to uphold white supremacy.” **said Daulton Jones, co-founder of People's Budget Bakersfield.**

“For the second year in a row the City Council had an opportunity to be on the right side of history and they blew it. We have literally done all the work for them, all they had to do was listen to the residents of Bakersfield and adopt a budget that actually reflects the needs of the community.” **said Faheemah Salahud-Din-Floyd, co-founder of People's Budget Bakersfield.** “A city budget is a moral agreement. It's supposed to reflect the needs and desires of the community but how can that be done when the community has no say in how their tax dollars are being spent? It is disgusting that our children have to live in a community where the city funds the state sanctioned murder of Black and Brown people. That is what's happening here in Bakersfield and across the country. My tax dollars are being used to hire more murderers who will kill me the first opportunity they get. The days of being silent are over. The days of reform are over. We aren't going anywhere. So get used to us.”

“Most people don't really want more police officers. They want to feel safe and secure in their homes. They want to know that their families and loved ones are safe. They are worried about crime and drugs and violence. But the data shows us over and over again that more police is not how we get those things. We need to invest in our communities. *That's* how we increase public safety. If the City Council won't do the research, won't talk to the community, won't do the right thing, then we all need to raise our voices and ensure that we are heard,” **said Temi Akanbi, coalition member of People's Budget of Bakersfield.**

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