

An Open Letter to an elected official

by Phillip W. Weiss

Carlina Rivera, Member
New York City Council

Dear Ms. Rivera:

In your newsletter dated June 8, 2020, you wrote the following:

I am committed to slashing the NYPD's massive \$6 billion budget and redirecting those funds towards education, health care, homelessness prevention, and youth and senior services, all of which face particularly dire shortfalls in the absence of greater state and federal help.¹

Last week there was rioting, the city was placed under a curfew, windows were smashed, people were terrorized, police were injured, stores are now boarded up, and Saks Fifth Avenue is now surrounded with barbed wire. These conditions obviously call for more police. Instead, you want fewer police, and maybe NO police. You are promoting a dangerous, destabilizing, and divisive policy that will harm the city and which gives cause for alarm.

The question of whether to defund the police department is a matter that is too critical to be decided solely by politicians. Instead the city council should schedule a citywide referendum to let the public directly decide the matter. The referendum should ask one question: Do you want New York City to have a publicly funded police department? Yes or No.

By proposing to defund the police department, you are joining with activist groups who represent only themselves, oppose the police on political grounds, and who are exploiting emotionally charged incidents to promote their own political agenda. By joining with them, you are providing political cover for those forces which oppose law and order and are acting contrary to the interests of your constituency which is your duty to defend and protect.

Sincerely,

Phillip W. Weiss

PWW 6/11/2020

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¹ News from Councilwoman Carlina Rivera, June 8, 2020