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Arrest of Trayon White Exposes Dangerous, Misguided DC Council Agenda and Fallacy of “Police Reform” Legislation

Millions Pumped into Questionable Violence Interruption Programs

(Washington, D.C.) -- The recent arrest of D.C. Councilmember Trayon White for accepting bribes has exposed the deeply flawed rationale behind much of the “Defund the Police” legislation passed by the Council under the guise of police reform.

It comes as little surprise that White was one of the principal supporters of funding violence interruption programs in lieu of hiring police officers and strengthening proven public safety measures. In the affidavit supporting his arrest, White boasted that he has “great weight” and is “a huge voice when it comes to violence prevention and the Council” during conversations in which he agreed to perform official acts for cash bribes totaling \$156,000.

Councilmember White is an unabashed antagonist of police. His rhetoric in support of funding violence interruption programs --beneficiaries of which include the business and its owner who bribed White-- called for “retribution” and “proper penance” to be paid by D.C. police officers.

In funding violence interruption organizations, the Council chose to give millions of taxpayer dollars to shady businesses touting unproven approaches to improving public safety. News reports following White’s arrest point to programs run by [unscrupulous business owners](#) and, in at least one instance, [a business that may not even exist](#). The Council required very basic reporting from recipients of taxpayer money and took no action when reports were incomplete or missing.

“Members of the D.C. Council are loathe to admit that ‘violence interruption’ is another failed concept and that fully-funded policing is the primary method to combat crime and improve public safety. The Council must freeze wasteful spending on unproven, shady programs now. There is no science-based metric or data that justifies the spending of millions of dollars on

these programs,” said DC Police Union Chairman Gregory Pemberton. “Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Police Department is still not fully staffed. Our ranks remain at nearly a 50-year low. **If the Council is serious about addressing crime in the District, it will stop funding unproven, fraudulent programs and fully fund MPD, including measures to bolster recruitment and retention.**”

Based on the corruption revealed by the U.S. Attorney’s Office in the District’s violence interruption program, the D.C. Police Union is calling on the District to take the following actions:

- Immediately cease the funding and operations of all violence interruption programs operating through the D.C. government until a complete and thorough audit and investigation can be conducted of their activities.
- Immediately terminate the contracts of any violence interruption programs that have failed to properly follow all program procedures (including background checks) or that have made any financial contributions to any political officeholder.
- Engage in a comprehensive study to ascertain whether any of the violence interruption programs have produced a measurable level of effectiveness or results, and the costs associated with the results.
- Establish the necessary initiatives and funding to properly staff the Metropolitan Police Department with the appropriate number of sworn officers that has been identified by Mayor Bowser as necessary to reduce violent crime and protect the residents, visitors and businesses in the District.

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