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Karen DuBois-Walton Calls for New Haven to Invest \$10 Million in Police Accountability and Community Violence Prevention

New Haven, CT (April 14, 2021) – In a recorded video released this morning, Karen DuBois-Walton called for the city of New Haven to invest \$10 million in programs to reduce gun violence and increase police accountability in the city. President Biden’s American Rescue Plan will send the city more than \$94 million in recovery and relief funds over the coming months, a unique opportunity to make a significant investment in community safety.

This call comes in the wake of the shooting of Daunte Wright in Minnesota, two people under eighteen in Hartford this past weekend, a spike in gun violence in New Haven over the past year, and now the tragic violence in Branford just yesterday. But it also comes almost a year after the murder of George Floyd and the protests that swept across New Haven and the country, since which New Haven has seen little-to-no change in the role of policing in the city.

“Let us not mourn another Daunte Wright here in New Haven because we failed to act,” **DuBois-Walton said**. “Let’s not assemble here, as in Hartford, crying over a baby whose life was taken. Let’s not allow 2021’s homicide numbers to look like 2020’s. Let’s use the resources provided to us through the Federal government to invest in meaningful change.”

President Biden’s American Rescue Plan includes \$350 billion in aid to state and local governments, \$94 million of which New Haven is projected to receive directly. For a city with a total budget of approximately \$600 million, this one-time infusion opens up the possibility of making investments that could have a long-term impact on the community.

“We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” **said DuBois-Walton**. The federal government is pouring millions of dollars into New Haven, money that could be spent addressing the very inequities that lead to over-policing, community violence, disproportionate COVID spread and more. This money must be spent in ways that are driven by the community and reflect investment in the community.”

New Haven has seen a sharp increase in violence over the past year, with 20 homicides in 2020 and 9 already in 2021, most of which appear to be the result of gun violence. The COVID-19 pandemic has simultaneously disproportionately harmed low-income families in New Haven, reducing access to low-wage work and further damaging housing affordability and economic opportunity.

“Why link these together--the call for police accountability on over-policing and the tragic level of gun violence in our community?” **DuBois-Walton said**. “We know that poverty and crime are inextricably linked, and we know that we don’t solve crime through over-policing. Fundamentally, the gun violence in

our community and the centuries-long over-policing of our community comes from the same place: historic underinvestment.”

In her call to action, DuBois-Walton outlined an entire suite of policies, ideas, and investments the city could make to begin to reduce gun violence and increase police accountability in the city. Those include:

- Investments in community-led violence disruption and restorative justice efforts, like the work done by the Bereavement Care Network, Ice the Beef, the CT Violence Intervention Program, Sport Academy, Black Lives Matter New Haven, the Citywide Youth Coalition, and many others.
- Investments in community organizations that can bring civilian partnerships to deal with problems that need not be handled by the police, like expanding partnerships between the police and clinicians as developed by the Yale Child Study Center, or funding diversionary services for mental health care, addiction treatment, domestic violence prevention, and other types of interventions where people need care more than engagement with the criminal justice system.
- Targeted investments in models that create economic opportunity for our community members and in the basic economic needs that we all require, like housing, jobs, workforce development and entrepreneurial opportunities; a universal basic income could be this kind of innovative program that moves community members out of poverty.
- A renewed commitment to enacting the police accountability recommendations that this community marched for over a year ago and implement the reforms for which Senator Gary Winfield, People Against Police Brutality, Black Lives Matter, Civilian Review Board advocates, and others throughout our city called. These include:
 - Revising the city’s rules of engagement and use-of-force policies,
 - Investing in non-armed service providers for engagements that don’t require an armed officer,
 - Funding an external review of force numbers for a city of this size,
 - Implementing screening and wellness reviews of officers, with a focus on PTSD,
 - Incorporating mandatory intrinsic bias, anti-racism, and anti-bias training and use of force and de-escalation training,
 - Developing pipeline programs to recruit our own beginning in middle school, implement a public safety academy, and strengthen partnerships with the New Haven Promise and area universities,
 - Creating structure for meaningful community involvement that builds the relationship between the community and the police and fosters common knowledge and understanding,
 - Strengthening the newly formed Civilian Review Board and ensure it’s able to do its work effectively,
 - Strengthening support to officers who adhere to the duty-to-intervene requirements.

“Will \$10 million fund all of these programs right now? No,” **said DuBois-Walton**. “But \$90 million dollars are coming into this city. A \$10 million investment in these worthy causes is a down payment on a debt long overdue and the first step towards a bright future for our city.”

A video of DuBois-Walton’s full remarks is available [here](#).

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Karen DuBois-Walton has formed an exploratory committee for Mayor of the City of New Haven. With a passion for creating communities where all residents have the opportunity to thrive and a belief that we can create transformative change where others see limitations, Karen seeks to bring her leadership to create a New Haven that offers equitable opportunity for all. She knows that together we can envision and create a New Haven for All.