

My name is Cindy Eigler, and I am one of the Co-Executive Directors of the Chicago Torture Justice Center. Today I am offering testimony in strong support of the Justice for Black Lives resolution, Resolution 20-2867. I urge the County Board to pass this resolution and begin to immediately start the process to move County dollars out of policing and incarceration and into the resources that allow our communities to thrive.

The Chicago Torture Justice Center (CTJC) was created out of the Reparations Ordinance passed by City Council in 2015. The Ordinance acknowledged the need for repair and healing following decades of police torture under Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge. CTJC is the first and only center of its kind in the country. We seek to address the traumas of police violence and institutionalized racism through access to healing and wellness services, trauma-informed resources, and community connection.

Working day in and day out with survivors of police torture, police violence, and family members whose loved ones have been killed by the police, we attend to both the seen and unseen wounds. The individuals we work with suffer from trauma, depression, and deep levels of anxiety. Many continue to experience nightmares and flashbacks of their encounters with the police, returning them to a desperate state of fighting for their lives. Further, many are re-traumatized at the sight of a police vehicle or officer, causing their blood pressure to rise or to break out in a sweat, leaving them with paralyzing feelings of fear and distrust.

The vast majority of the individuals we work with were not only harmed at the hands of the police, but also experienced incredible harm and loss in the courts, in the jails, and in decades of incarceration. As we witness at the Center, and as corroborated by psychological experts, the trauma experienced as a result of policing and incarceration impacts entire families and seeps into the community.

We at CTJC call for accountability to these multiple systems that serve to control, harm, disappear, and kill Black and brown individuals. We know that 400+ years of racialized violence and killing will not be absolved by the arrests nor the firings of individual police officers, nor will the closure of one prison. We demand accountability that is grounded in a radical call to action. We demand not just apologies for harm done, but repentance and real change that can end and repair harm. We see the violent results of an excessively funded and over-militarized policing system. We demand our communities are provided with the resources and access they need to flourish.

Our budgets are values documents, and the hundreds of millions of dollars of the County budget that currently go to detaining and locking up Black and brown people do not represent our values. If the jail budget had been reduced to reflect the decrease in the number of people locked up since 2013, the County would have \$117 million to fund health care, housing, jobs, restorative justice, and more. That represents what we stand for.

We ask that you immediately pass the Justice for Black Lives Resolution, and ensure that the County's budget reflects the values and priorities of its communities.