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COMPLETE

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Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Rev. Charles Straight
Organization (if any):	Faith United Methodist Church
City/Town:	Dolton
State:	IL
ZIP:	60419

Q2

Tell us which meeting you wish to be recorded as a witness. If you don't know the meeting or date, we can help at 312.603.6398 or cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov. You can also look up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar. Please fill out a separate form for each meeting at which you wish to speak.

**County Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting
6/18/2020 10a**

Q3

Tell us the File ID number (example 17-0000) of the item on which you are registering your position. If you don't know the number, we can help at 312.603.6398 or cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov. You can also look it up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar

20-2867

Q4

What do you want to do?

DO NOT ATTEND THE MEETING but REGISTER IN FAVOR of a specific item (You may add written comments below)

Q5

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov

I am Rev. Charles Straight, pastor of the Faith United Methodist Church in Dolton and a leader with The People's Lobby.

I am testifying today to encourage the Cook County Board of Commissioners and President Toni Preckwinkle to divest money from the failed and racist system of policing and incarceration that has not kept our communities safe, and to instead invest that money in public services that promote community health and safety and are not administered by law enforcement. I'm also testifying in support of Resolution 20-2867, Justice for Black Lives, as a step towards this movement of resources, and I applaud Commissioner Brandon Johnson for introducing it.

In 2013, more than 10,000 people were incarcerated in Cook County Jail on any given day. The Cook County Department of Corrections had a budget of \$266 million, and the larger Cook County Sheriff budget - which also includes policing, juvenile detention, and probation, as well as the jail - had a budget of \$445 million. In the beginning of 2020, the number of people in the jail had decreased to 5,600 people per day, and as of June it is around 4,500. Despite that massive decrease in the number of people incarcerated – a more than 50% reduction – the Cook County Jail budget is \$336 million (a 26% increase from 2013), and the overall Sheriff Department budget in 2020 is \$608 million (a 36% increase).

If the Cook County Jail budget had decreased by the same proportion as the number of people incarcerated, that budget would be \$149 million instead of \$266 million, a difference of \$117 million that could be used to fund health care, mental health services, housing, restorative justice, job creation, and more.

In the wake of the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and thousands of people in the streets demanding the defunding of police, it is especially clear that Cook County must defund the Cook County Jail and redirect resources in the jail's budget to public services not administered by law enforcement such as housing, health care, restorative justice, job creation, and public transportation. I'd like to thank Commissioner Brandon Johnson for introducing Resolution 20-2867, Justice for Black Lives, as a step towards this movement of resources, and I urge the Cook County Board to pass this resolution.

Supporting Justice for Black Lives

Public comment by Rev. Charles Straight at Cook County Board of Commissioners meeting June 18, 2020

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