After pledging to "defund the police," Minneapolis City Council votes to increase police funding

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On Friday, the Democratic Party dominated Minneapolis City Council voted 7-6 to approve a $500,000 funding increase to add staff to the city's police department.

Under the plan, which was proposed by Democratic Mayor Jacob Frey, Minneapolis will receive help from Hennepin County sheriff's deputies and Metro Transit police officers and the city would reimburse those departments for the salaries and benefits of the officers.

Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arradondo told the city council meeting leading up to the vote that he needs 20 to 40 additional law enforcement officers starting this week to deal with rising violence.

The rising violence that Arradondo refers to is the reported increase in carjackings and robberies by 55 percent in the city, as well as just over 70 homicides in the city this year, a nearly 50 percent increase over the 48 killings recorded in 2019.

Most notably, some of the council members who voted for the budget increase had pledged earlier this year to "disband" the city's police force after massive multiethnic, multiracial, international protests broke out following the police murder of George Floyd on May 25.

During a rally on June 7 at Powderhorn Park in a working class neighborhood, council president Lisa Bender proclaimed that "…our efforts at incremental reform have failed, period," and that the solution should be to "…end policing as we know it and recreate systems that actually keep us safe."

Friday's vote makes it clear that the Democrats' promises were meant to disarm powerful protests by workers and young people demanding an end to police violence in the US and direct them back into the Democratic party. This, along with the racial narrative that has been deployed by the Democratic Party, cover up the underlying reality and the root cause of police violence: capitalism.

Following the council meeting, Minnesota Public Radio News conducted a six-question survey to Minneapolis' 13 city council members. Among the questions was one asking if members support abolishing the Minneapolis Police Department entirely, to which no members responded "yes," seven refused to respond, and the rest responded "no." Among those who responded "no" is councilperson Phillipe Cunningham, who has been a vocal proponent of defunding the Minneapolis Police.

In fact, in September, a council meeting on police reform turned into demands by the Democrats for police to take more action. Council members complained to Arradondo about increased crime rates, including reports from residents suggesting that, rather than police not being present, they were being defiant, and standing back according to Council President Lisa Bender.

The support which the Democrats have shown for the police and their backpedaling on the popular demand to defund the police are a vindication of the warnings made by the *World Socialist Web Site*. The police are not "guardians of safety" or neutral arbiters of the law, but as Lenin and Engels explained, they are the enforcers of inequality and class rule, and the state will only increase their powers as the antagonisms grow.

Despite the reports of less police activity from council members, nationally police violence has continued, with over 830 people killed so far this year according to the *Washington Post*. While African

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American men are disproportionately the victims, the police kill workers of all races, gender, and ethnicities. The thing that victims of police have in common is that they are overwhelmingly poor and working class.

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