

After defunding the police in 2020, Springfield politicians now requesting federal and Massachusetts state police

In 2020, the Springfield, Massachusetts city council voted to cut \$1 million dollars (\$200,000 of police overtime, \$800,000 for a new firing range) from the 2021 Springfield Police budget. This week, after a spike in gun violence and homicides, Springfield politicians are calling for a permanent State and federal police presence.

Springfield representative Rep. Bud Williams asked Governor Maura Healey to permanently increase the presence of the State Police and for federal law enforcement agencies to establish “a greater presence” in his city as it deals with an uptick in gun violence this year. He is also asking for FBI, DEA, and ATF agents to be “permanently assigned” to fight crime in Springfield.

The Springfield Police Department appears to still be on the decline with recruitment and retention. Earlier this year, Springfield police superintendent Cheryl Clapprood reported that the police “ranks are thin, experienced officers are leaving and recruiting is drawing low numbers.”

Crime appears to be accelerating in Springfield. According to Springfield Police, there were 20 shooting incidents in Springfield between June 1 and Aug. 14 (up 400% from last year), including 12 homicides (a 500% increase from a year ago).

While the City Council was cutting police overtime by \$200,000 in 2020 they approved \$250,000 to fund the new Office of Racial Equality.

Springfield City Councilors who voted to cut \$200,000 of police overtime in 2020 were Victor Davila, Melvin Edwards, Adam Gomez, Jesse Lederman, Orlando Ramos, Marcus Williams, Whitfield, and Council President Justin Hurst. City Councilors who opposed to the cut were Timothy Allen, Sean Curran, Mike Fenton, Kateri Walsh, and Malo Brown.