



I.U.P.A. LOCAL 6021

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF POLICE ASSOCIATIONS
BROWARD LIEUTENANTS ASSOCIATION
THE VOICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

September 24, 2024

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Governor of the State of Florida
The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street.
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Governor DeSantis:

The International Union of Police Associations (IUPA) Local 6021 represents members who are employed as law enforcement lieutenants at the Broward County Sheriff's Office (BSO). The IUPA Local 6021 knows you are a staunch supporter of law enforcement and have always been against any method of defunding the police. Governor DeSantis, you have made it well known that in Florida, we support the police and stand against any sort of defunding of the police. Unfortunately, the current Broward County Board of Commissioners has been steadily defunding the largest sheriff's office in the state of Florida and third largest sheriff's office in the United States of America, BSO. As a result of this defunding, this union conducted a brief inquiry into spending by Broward County Government in recent years and discovered they have been transferring funds in their possession to an organization that seeks to defund the police, an organization that seeks to influence elections, and excessive spending on their own salaries and a new governmental center. With crime rising in many areas and active killer situations occurring more and more frequently around this country, now more than ever is there a need for law enforcement to not have their funding reduced. Governor DeSantis, you especially are familiar with the public safety issues Broward County has been subjected to from the 2017 shooting at the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport and 2018 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Broward County also in 2022, suffered a public safety crisis with Regional Communications due to underpaid salaries from inadequate funding from the Broward County Board of Commissioners and an older helicopter that crashed in 2023, killing multiple people.



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In fiscal year 2016, Broward County adopted a countywide millage rate of 5.4741 which levied approximately \$824,526,204, in tax revenue. In fiscal year 2016, BSO's revised budget from Broward County was approximately \$478,248,590 consisting of total general funds from Broward County and funding for Regional Communications, also funded by the Broward County Board of Commissioners. BSO's fiscal year 2016 budget funded from Broward County Government consumed approximately 58% of the taxes levied from the countywide millage rate. The standard of funding law enforcement at approximately 58%, is a standard that the current Broward County Board of Commissioners does not believe in as they have drastically reduced the amount of future revenue received from the countywide millage rate in an effort to defund BSO through reallocation.

Over the past 8 fiscal years, the Broward County Board of Commissioners has been allocating a smaller percentage of newly added tax revenue from Broward County's tax revenue generated from the countywide millage rate to BSO. Current Broward County Commissioner Steve Geller recently advocated to Broward County cities for them to reduce funding for BSO as well. Unfortunately, Commissioner Geller began advocating for this reduction in funding to BSO to contract cities in July of 2021, approximately 1 year after the defund the police movement began, and approximately 8 months after the Broward County Board of Commissioners awarded funds in the possession of Broward County Government to the biggest advocates for defunding law enforcement, Black Lives Matter. While Broward County embraces this idea of reduced funding for law enforcement, neighboring Palm Beach County and the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office are committing a 16% increase in salaries alone over the next approximately 3 years for their law enforcement officers. This is despite the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office already compensating their law enforcement officers significantly higher than BSO currently.

This union would like to point out that there has been significant turnover on the Broward County Board of Commissioners over the past approximately 10 to 12 years. Since fiscal year 2017, the Broward County Board of Commissioners has only allocated approximately 38% of newly added tax revenue from Broward County's countywide millage rate toward BSO, thus steadily decreasing BSO's overall allocation, which reflects an approximately 36% decrease



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from the prior funding standard of approximately 58%. Of these current Broward County Board of Commissioners, many of them assumed office between 2012 and 2016, and have begun implementing their idea of what police funding should be. As a result of scaling back funds allocated to BSO, the agency's collective attrition rate is up substantially from 2014, according to Florida Department of Law Enforcement Criminal Justice Agency Profile Reports. Currently, vacancies for law enforcement officers at BSO are disproportionately higher than our competing departments and BSO is barely overcoming overall attrition unlike neighboring departments like the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, Miami-Dade Police Department, and Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation. Salaries for law enforcement officers at BSO have not been increased properly due to being underfunded which has resulted in the agency falling behind other competing sheriff's offices in pay. It was not until after the defunding began that BSO began having the issues noted in this letter.

Below is a chart containing the dollar amount in added tax revenue based on adopted taxes that Broward County took in year over year from the countywide millage rate, excluding countywide debt. The chart also contains the added dollar amount that BSO's adopted budget was increased each fiscal year in their total general fund allocation and for Regional Communications which is funded by the Broward County Board of Commissioners.

Fiscal Year	Broward County Added Tax Revenue from Previous Fiscal Year (Adopted Taxes)	BSO Dollar Increase from Prior Fiscal Year (Adopted Budget)	% Of Added Tax Revenue Allocated from Broward County's Increase to BSO
2017	\$63,555,745	\$23,925,570	38%
2018	\$83,908,450	\$33,264,600	40%
2019	\$68,987,039	\$21,966,960	32%
2020	\$63,351,758	\$28,116,890	44%
2021	\$52,728,854	\$11,710,450	22%
2022	\$68,885,851	\$25,027,040	36%
2023	\$136,933,329	\$52,988,920	39%



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2024	\$163,435,077	\$68,408,480	42%
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Over the past 8 fiscal years, Broward County has added approximately \$701,786,103 dollars in tax revenue from the countywide millage rate. Of the amount, over the past 8 fiscal years, BSO has been allocated approximately \$265,408,910 which is approximately 38% of the added tax revenue from the countywide millage rate that Broward County has received. Approximately 38% is the standard that this current Broward County Board of Commissioners believes BSO should be funded at and not the prior standard of approximately 58%. It is extremely disturbing that after all the public safety shortcomings that have occurred in Broward County over the past approximately 10 years, that the Broward County Board of Commissioners would reduce the percentage allocated for law enforcement and get in line and support the organization Black Lives Matter, a group that wants to defund the police.

In 2018, IUPA Local 6020, went to the Broward County Board of Commissioners during impasse where the Broward County Board of Commissioners voted against providing additional funding to boost salaries for the membership which they represent. When BSO requests additional funding from Broward County Government, the Board of Commissioners and County Administrator constantly offer resistance. The Broward County Board of Commissioners rather than reallocate funds they have stripped from public safety back to BSO has chosen to criticize law enforcement publicly. The Broward County Commission has told the public that BSO not being content with reduced funding would result in an approximately 33% tax increase and has attempted to depict law enforcement as the problem. The only problem is the gradual defunding of law enforcement by the Broward County Board of Commissioners which they should fix without punishing the taxpayers. It's a simple solution, reallocate what has been gradually taken away from public safety over the past approximately 10 years since this negative trend began.

Unfortunately, some of this defunding is directly tied into self-enrichment, using government to push personal political views, and connected to the 2020 defund the police movement which appears to have gained sympathy in Broward County from the Broward County Board of Commissioners and Broward County Administrator. The Broward County Board of



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Commissioners relies heavily on Broward County Administrator Monica Cepero for financial recommendations, and they ultimately set her salary. Administrator Cepero assumed the role of Broward County Administrator in 2022, and it couldn't be clearer that her focus is on herself, not the public she serves, and not public safety. Administrator Cepero's employment agreement stated when she would assume her role in 2022, that she would be provided an annual salary of \$368,892. In addition to the high annual salary were numerous benefits to include a monthly vehicle allowance of \$735 per calendar month. Since assuming her role, over the past approximately 2 years, Cepero has received an approximately \$92,340 pay raise, an approximately 25% increase, bringing her annual salary to \$461,232. While the police are being stripped of funding, Broward County Administrator Cepero due to her massive pay raises is currently paid an annual salary more than any State of Florida Government employee and the President of the United States. Administrator Cepero, with only two years into her role, is paid more than any employee in Miami-Dade County government, a more populated county, and it looks as if she is the highest paid County Administrator in the entire country from what research is revealing thus far. The Broward County Administrator isn't the only one bringing in a hefty salary, the combined total for the annual salaries for Broward County Governments highest paid 25 employees are \$7,959,414.11. These over-the-top annual salaries combined are more than the total budget for some of BSO's contract cities for police services from fiscal year 2024.

As the third largest sheriff's office in the United States, BSO rightfully deserved a state-of-the-art training facility so that the agency can train their employees to maximize their ability to serve and protect the citizens of Broward County. BSO as an agency that employs just under 5,500 employees, recently had constructed the Research, Development and Training Center (RDTC), to provide the best training to its employees to maximize public safety services provided to the community. The final anticipated cost of the RDTC was approximately \$73,600,000, according to the audit that was conducted by Broward County Auditor Robert Melton. The Broward County Board of Commissioners has publicly voiced their criticism of the total expenditure on the RDTC by BSO. While the Broward County Board of Commissioners criticizes approximately \$73,600,000 being spent on a training center for the third largest sheriff's office in the country, they had no issue progressing the construction



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of the new Broward County Governmental Center on November 14th, 2023, with it passing overwhelmingly with an 8 to 1 vote. This vote of approval is despite the construction of the building coming with an estimated cost of approximately \$322,000,000, approximately 338% more than what the final anticipated cost of BSO's RDTTC was reported per Broward County Auditor Melton. Yahoo News posted an article from the SunSentinel where they quoted Commissioner Michael Udine, the lone vote against the high priced new governmental center, questioning the total cost of it in the following comment, "Are Broward County voters ready to spend half-a-billion dollars on a new government center?". When it comes to investing in the salaries of their own or their own building, Broward County Government has no issue splurging. On September 17th, 2024, the Broward County Commission held a budget hearing. During the hearing, Commissioner Geller stated BSO's funding, despite the percentage of new tax revenue given to BSO being reduced over the years, is still not sustainable and Commissioner Udine stated that BSO's first responders get paid enough, despite BSO having recruitment and retention issues. The truth is what is not sustainable is Broward County Government having their top 25 earners receive combined salaries that totals more than what some cities can spend on an entire police department or spending \$322 million dollars on the construction project for their own building.


In 2020, the group Black Lives Matter were strong advocates of defunding the police. In 2020, the Broward County Board of Commissioners voted to award funds in their possession to Black Lives Matter. It is inexcusable that even 1 cent from Broward County Government would be given to any group that calls for defunding law enforcement in general, defunding BSO as an agency, and stood outside of the BSO Main Jail with a defund the police banner. Below are just some of the many defund the police posts that the Black Lives Matter Broward Chapter posted on social media platform X just months before being awarded funds from the Broward County Board of Commissioners.



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← Post

 **Black Lives Matter Alliance Br...** @BLM_Broward **Follow**


We keep us safe #DefundBSO #DefundFLPD #DefundHBPD #BLM954

17:00 · 9/3/20

 **Black Lives Matter Alliance Br...** @BLM_Broward **Follow**


Defund the Police

10:40 · 7/18/20

 **Black Lives Matter Alliance Br...** @BLM_Broward **Follow**

Coral Springs Residents, Youth Organizers and Activists Respond to Dismissive Commissioners During Most Recent Commission Meeting

ow.ly/ETAD50ABYIW



15:23 · 7/18/20

The most disheartening part of the Broward County Board of Commissioners voting during the November 10th, 2020, Regular Meeting to provide funds in their custody to a group that called for the defunding of law enforcement is that it was overwhelmingly supported with 8 out of 9 Broward County Board of Commissioners voting in favor of it. It should be noted that the one commissioner who voted against it only did so because the funds were being distributed via Broward County Government, but overall stated this action was brought with good intentions. Any group that wants to defund the police does not have good intentions.

U. MOTION TO DIRECT Office of the County Attorney to draft an agreement with Black Lives Matter in the amount of \$1,500 to further the organization's mission of structuring local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities; and authorize the County Administrator to execute the agreement and take all necessary administrative and budgetary actions required to implement same.

(Commissioner Furr and a member of the public pulled this item.)

ACTION: (T-11:02 AM) **Approved.** (Refer to minutes for full discussion.)

VOTE: 8-1. **Commissioner Rich voted in the affirmative telephonically. Commissioner Furr voted against this item.**

Black Lives Matter and its chapters throughout the United States still promote dangerous rhetoric. In October 2023, Senator Marco Rubio condemned this organization and its chapters for their support of Hamas, a designated terrorist organization by the United States.



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During the November 10th, 2020, Regular Meeting, the Broward County Commission also awarded funds in their custody to Florida New Majority, an organization aligned with the Democrat Party, who's clearly spent a large amount of effort trying to influence elections. The organization has also utilized the name New Florida Majority and currently goes by Florida Rising. It is inexcusable that 1 cent from Broward County Government would be given to any organization that seeks to influence elections regardless of their political affiliation. The Federal Elections Committee (FEC) database shows that New Florida Majority is registered under ID C90011438, and revealed that from January 2020, through September 2020, New Florida Majority spent \$131,615.16 supporting Senator Elizabeth Warren and \$5,790, opposing President Donald Trump. Yet after displaying this level of one-sided political spending, the Broward County Board of Commissioners provided funds in their custody to Florida New Majority. It is important to note that the Broward County Board of Commissioners are all registered Democrats. This gives the appearance of the Broward County Board of Commissioners utilizing tax dollars to fund an organization who is seeking to influence elections in line with their personal political views. Tax dollars being awarded to an organization after they display this level of one-sided political involvement is inexcusable.

S. MOTION TO DIRECT Office of the County Attorney to draft an agreement with Florida New Majority in the amount of \$2,000 to further the organization's mission of working to increase the voting and political power of marginalized and excluded constituencies toward an inclusive, equitable, and just Florida; and authorize the County Administrator to execute the agreement and take all necessary administrative and budgetary actions required to implement same.

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Regular Meeting Agenda

November 10, 2020

(Commissioner Furr and a member of the public pulled this item.)

ACTION: (T-11:02 AM) *Approved. (Refer to minutes for full discussion.)*

VOTE: 8-1. *Commissioner Rich voted in the affirmative telephonically. Commissioner Furr voted against this item.*

Committee information

Committee name: NEW FLORIDA MAJORITY

Mailing address: 10800 BISCAYNE BLVD, STE. 1050
MIAMI, FL 33161

Treasurer: None

Committee type: Independent expenditure filer (not a committee)

Committee designation: Unauthorized



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Independent expenditures

Filter this data

This tab shows spending that this committee has made in support of or opposition to a candidate. None of the funds are directly given to or spent by the candidate.

Coverage dates: 01/01/2020 to 09/30/2020

Amount	Support/Oppose	Candidate
\$131,615.16	Support	WARREN, ELIZABETH
\$5,790.00	Oppose	TRUMP, DONALD J.

Results per page: 30

Showing 1 to 2 of 2 entries

The \$131,615.16, expended by New Florida Majority supporting Senator Elizabeth Warren to be the Democratic Party nominee for President of the United States in the 2020 election had expenditure dates ranging from January 24th, 2020, through March 2nd, 2020. The \$5,790, expended by New Florida Majority, opposing then President Donald Trump for reelection, has an expenditure date of August 14th, 2020. As noted, a couple months later, the Broward County of Board of Commissioners then awards this partisan organization funding. This is a clear indication of impropriety when the Broward County Board of Commissioners, comprised entirely of Democrats, will turn over taxpayer dollars to an organization that spent just under \$140,000 in 2020, trying to influence the general election in favor of the Democrat Party.

The Broward County Board of Commissioners during the November 10th, 2020, Regular Meeting routinely referred to groups such as Black Lives Matter and New Florida Majority as “charities”. Organizations that seek to defund law enforcement or heavily influence elections in favor of one political party should not be deemed as charities by elected officials in an attempt to disguise the impropriety of awarding them taxpayer funds. As of September 23rd, 2024, Broward County had a total of 1,130,504 registered voters, of which, 511,019 are registered Democrats, approximately 45% of the total registered voters. Tax revenue comes from individuals who are Republicans, Democrats, members of third parties, or even those



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who do not affiliate with any political party. For the Broward County Board of Commissioners to utilize tax revenue to fund any partisan political organization is wrong and unethical.

Based on some of the comments from the November 10th, 2020, Regular Meeting of the Broward County Board of Commissioners, it appears that they have engaged in this distribution of taxpayer funds for “charities” before and that they intended to continue to do so going into the future. It leaves the question of is the Broward County Board of Commissioners still utilizing taxpayer funds from their approximately \$8 billion dollar budget to distribute to groups that wish to defund law enforcement or influence our elections in favor of one political party and then advertise the distribution of the taxpayer funds to these organizations as simply giving to “charity”? It also leaves the question of are there more instances that have already occurred where taxpayer dollars were utilized by the Broward County Board of Commissioners to fund partisan political organizations or anti-law enforcement organizations?

Broward County Government wrongly believes defunding the police will solve various issues in the community. If there’s one thing the defund the police movement from 2020 revealed was that when public safety is diminished all other aspects of society worsen. Governor DeSantis, it would be greatly beneficial for the public if the Auditor General for the State of Florida is directed to conduct a full-scale audit of Broward County Government to evaluate and seek out any wasteful and unethical spending over the past several years. Broward County Government cannot be allowed to gaslight members of the public regarding how they say they spend taxpayer dollars, cannot be allowed to provide funds to any organization that seeks to defund law enforcement, cannot be allowed to provide funds to any organization that’s primary purpose is to influence our elections, and cannot be allowed to decrease the allocated percentage of funding provided to law enforcement. There is clearly enough concerning spending occurring from Broward County Government and signs of wasteful and excessive spending which includes their new governmental center project estimated to cost over \$320 million, their inexcusably high salaries, taxpayer dollars going to a one-sided political organization that tried to influence elections, and taxpayer dollars going to an



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organization that wants to defund the police to warrant this audit. Any unethical behavior revealed from the audit should be reviewed by the Florida Commission on Ethics.

Governor DeSantis, the IUPA Local 6021 asks for your support as we continue to advocate for Broward County Government to put an end to this defunding of law enforcement and ensure the Broward County Board of Commissioners stops reallocating funds away BSO for the good of public safety for Broward County's approximately 1.9 million residents.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Cowart

Matt Cowart

President, I.U.P.A. Local 6021

CC:

Florida Auditor General Sherrill F. Norman, CPA

Florida Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Núñez

Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody

Florida Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis

Florida Commission on Ethics

Exhibits (Click for Link):

Broward County Government:

- [Broward Fiscal Year 2016 Adopted Taxes Levied for Countywide Millage Rate \(floridarevenue.com\)](http://floridarevenue.com)
- [Broward Fiscal Year 2017 Adopted Taxes Levied for Countywide Millage Rate \(floridarevenue.com\)](http://floridarevenue.com)
- [Broward Fiscal Year 2018 Adopted Taxes Levied for Countywide Millage Rate \(floridarevenue.com\)](http://floridarevenue.com)



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- [Broward Fiscal Year 2019 Adopted Taxes Levied for Countywide Millage Rate is on Page 8 \(floridarevenue.com\)](#)
- [Broward Fiscal Year 2020 Adopted Taxes Levied for Countywide Millage Rate \(floridarevenue.com\)](#)
- [Broward Fiscal Year 2021 Adopted Taxes Levied for Countywide Millage Rate is on Page 7 \(floridarevenue.com\)](#)
- [Broward Fiscal Year 2022 Adopted Taxes Levied for Countywide Millage Rate is on Page 37](#)
- [Broward Fiscal Year 2023 Adopted Taxes Levied for Countywide Millage Rate is on Page 37](#)
- [Broward Fiscal Year 2024 Adopted Taxes Levied for Countywide Millage Rate is on Page 39](#)
- [Broward County Vote to Award Money to Black Lives Matter in 2020 \(page 38\) and Florida New Majority in 2020 \(page 33 and 34\)](#)
- [Video of Broward County Government's Regular Meeting from November 10th, 2020](#)
- [Broward County Vote to Progress Construction of New Broward County Governmental Center](#)
- [2021 Agreement for Employment of Monica Cepero as Broward County Administrator](#)
- Public Records Request Showing Salaries for Broward Government's Top 25 Earners is Available Upon Request

Broward Sheriff's Office

- [BSO Fiscal Year 2016 Revised Budget \(Page 14\)](#)
- [BSO Fiscal Year 2017 Adopted Budget \(Page 13\)](#)
- [BSO Fiscal Year 2018 Adopted Budget \(Page 11\)](#)
- [BSO Fiscal Year 2019 Adopted Budget \(Page 15\)](#)
- [BSO Fiscal Year 2020 Adopted Budget \(Page 14\)](#)
- [BSO Fiscal Year 2021 Adopted Budget \(Page 14\)](#)
- [BSO Fiscal Year 2022 Adopted Budget \(Page 14\)](#)
- [BSO Fiscal Year 2023 Adopted Budget \(Page 14\)](#)
- [BSO Fiscal Year 2024 Adopted Budget \(Page 14\)](#)



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X Posts from Black Lives Matter Broward Chapter

- https://x.com/blm_broward/status/1284498166226837505?s=46&t=FyCbQNvZyYmChYJwyvIGlg
- https://x.com/blm_broward/status/1284569377380225026?s=46&t=FyCbQNvZyYmChYJwyvIGlg
- https://x.com/blm_broward/status/1301626219918745600?s=46&t=FyCbQNvZyYmChYJwyvIGlg

News/ Media

- [Letter from Senator Rubio and Other Congressional Members Condemning Black Lives Matter and its Chapters for Supporting Hamas](#)
- [Florida Voice News Article: Broward approves new government center, to cost nearly \\$322 million](#)
- [Yahoo News post of SunSentinel Article: Broward will build a new county government building at an estimated \\$322 million](#)

Federal Elections Commission:

- [New Florida Majority Contributions in 2020 Election](#)
- [New Florida Majority Contributions Opposing President Donald Trump in 2020 Election](#)
- [New Florida Majority Contributions Supporting Senator Elizabeth Warren for President in 2020 Election](#)