

ABOLISH
DEFUND
DEMILITARIZE:

The language of police reform

a starter guide

@MPCWLY



There are at least three big ideas/strategies floating around for how we should reform policing in this United States. Don't let the simplicity of these action words fool you. Their meanings in the context of policing are nuanced, and you need to understand them BEFORE forming an opinion.

ABOLISH, DEFUND, DEMILITARIZE. There are many proposed tactics within each of these strategies and an infinite number of ways they can be applied.

So do your research.

Here are important notes to get you started:

ABOLISH

This strategy does NOT advocate for the complete abandonment of public safety or accountability. These movements (plural) often recognize that community policing is steeped in a racist history and seek to radically reimagine what law enforcement (as a concept) could look like.

DEFUND

This strategy seeks to reroute funding away from policing and into community programs and resources. The goal is to decrease crime by providing more opportunities to people. It does not mean gutting police budgets to \$0. This strategy asks us to think deeply about what causes crime and suggests we treat crime as a symptom.

DEMILITARIZE

Do police need tanks? Tear gas? Grenade launchers? Weaponized aircraft? Surveillance drones? Camouflage uniforms? Should they be performing no-knock raids? Efforts to demilitarize the police are centered on ensuring that police do not act as a military force that wages war on communities (primarily communities of color).