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Another Child's Life Ends Too Soon in a Police Shooting – This Must End

COLUMBUS, OH – The news that a Black teenage girl – a child named Ma'Khia Bryant who was just 16 years-old – had been killed by the Columbus Police Department just as the Chauvin trial verdict was announced on Tuesday is devastating on so many levels. Ma'Khia should be in school today, but her precious life was ended much too soon. This is a tragic loss to her family and all those who cared for her. It is a loss to our future and the vibrancy of our communities and state, which every single one of our children is a part of.

This tragedy is a reminder that a city that [spends more than a third of its budget](#) on its police department does not equate to creating a safer community for its residents. Especially not for Black people. In fact, a [third of all Black Ohioans who have been killed by police have been killed by the Columbus Police](#). Further, [half of all use-of-force incidents in the Columbus police department are situations where force is used against Black people](#), even though Black people account for just over a quarter of our city's population. In fact, the [Ohio Alliance for Innovation in Population Health](#) recently issued a report finding that Franklin County is one of the deadliest counties in America with its high rates of police shootings. This is not the life we want for our children and families – we all deserve better and our children are counting on it.

We share in the vision for a safer city that focuses on upstream investments in life-giving systems - better resourced schools, accessible health care, improved community programs and services such as transportation and recreation, youth employment opportunities, and opportunities to live well – which represent more effective use of taxpayer dollars to promote public safety. We have much further to go. In the short term, we stand firm with other community advocates, in particular with families that have lost loved ones to police violence, who are leading the way in calling for greater accountability from their public officials and from our city's justice system. We are seeking clear commitment and swift action to make our communities safer for all children by:

- Requiring every Ohio community to have a plan in place for an alternative rapid response system for children in crisis.
- Centering mental health response as first responders to children and families in crisis.
- Restructuring community resources to support basic needs of our neighbors such as affordable housing, healthcare, nutrition, transportation, and schools, as research-based and effective community safety strategies.



Children's Defense Fund-Ohio supports a full investigation by BCI. We also call on Mayor Andrew Ginther, and the Columbus City Council, led by City Council President Shannon Hardin, to review the recommendations put forth in the Final Report of the Columbus Community Safety Advisory Commission, released on January 28, 2020. Specifically, we call on them to review the 80 recommendations and reflect on whether these get to the heart of the matter and if implemented would they help to avert the adultification and criminalization of Black and Brown children in our communities.

We cannot wait for another tragedy to befall our children to take action.