



Transforming Seattle's Public Safety & Police Accountability *Creating Equitable Community Safety*

As a civil rights lawyer for more than a decade, I worked tirelessly to get justice for victims of police violence and racially biased policing across Washington and Seattle. In one of my most high-profile cases, [Monetti v Seattle](#), I sued the Seattle Police Department on behalf of a young Latino man after a detective threatened to “beat the Mexican piss” out of him, while other officers stood around observing and failing to intervene. My work on this and other civil rights cases is what fuels my vision and commitment to transform Seattle’s approach to public safety and accountability.

We need real police accountability that meets this civil rights moment, and we need leaders with a track record to implement it. In 2017, I worked with the community to champion the passage of landmark legislation to expand civilian oversight of the police department, establish the Office of Inspector General for Public Safety, and make the Community Police Commission permanent. I also worked to end the SPD’s acquisition of military surplus equipment.

While I am proud of the work we have done together to advance true police reform, accountability and community-based investments in alternatives to law enforcement, there is much more we must and can do together.

Seattle’s next Mayor will be responsible for building on the progress that we have made. Armed law enforcement should not be responding to a mental health crisis or a non-violent situation. This is not only an unnecessary use of resources but too often results in needless death and trauma in our Black, brown, and indigenous communities. My administration will work to shift funds toward programs like the Health One Mobile units, the Crisis Response Team, alternative community safety programs like Community Service Officers, and other public-health models that rapidly address the health and crisis needs of those experiencing homelessness.

As the next Mayor, I will bring together community, council and labor to ensure that the next contract with the police officer’s guild includes critical components of the [2017 Police Accountability Ordinance](#), which I worked to pass, that have been left on the table by past mayors.

Our next Mayor also must take a hands-on approach to crisis management and exercise their legal authority over the Seattle Police Department. [Recent reporting](#) revealed that the order to abandon the East Precinct last summer was given while the Mayor was apparently absent from the discussion. Civilian control of the police is critical to a functioning democracy, and the Mayor cannot abdicate her responsibility to exercise control over the Seattle Police Department. It is unacceptable to have un-elected officials making these crucial life and death decisions, and it will not happen under my administration.



We also need to work to reduce gun violence that disproportionately impacts our Black, brown, and indigenous communities. As a Mexican-American growing up in the Lower Yakima Valley, I lost friends to gun violence and have also survived, without injury, drive-by shootings.

That is why as a councilmember I have prioritized working with gun safety advocates to pass three major gun violence prevention laws during my tenure. The first requires safe storage of firearms, reducing the theft of firearms, suicides, and accidental deaths. The second was increasing penalties for individuals who failed to report a lost or stolen firearm. The third expanded the regional domestic violence firearms enforcement unit to get guns out of the hands of dangerous individuals. Lastly, I also supported the appropriation of revenue from the ammunition tax to fund public health research at Harborview to continue supporting data-driven research to prevent gun violence.

In 2021, I also voted in support of allocating [\\$10.4 million toward community safety programs](#) to address the epidemic of gun violence harming our communities. I will work with urgency to immediately implement gun-violence prevention programs.

Additionally, we have to work with our federal and state partners to allow Seattle to build on the gun safety laws we have already passed. Currently we are preempted by federal and state laws from passing true and meaningful gun safety legislation, such as a ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines.

Seattle's mayor plays a critical role in setting the narrative and sending a clear message to the NRA and their political allies that their policies are wrong for the people of our city. Much of the gun violence inside major cities comes from guns that are legally purchased in other jurisdictions with looser laws. We need stronger state and federal gun violence prevention laws to keep guns out of our city, and we need to work with our state and federal partners to prevent illegal guns from coming into Seattle. That's why I'm so honored to have the endorsement of federal and state leaders like Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal and State Sen. Rebecca Saldaña. These relationships will be critical to supporting their advocacy and making sure they have local support to champion reform and accountability in Olympia and DC.