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Defund the police? N.J. attorney general says more spending is needed.

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New Jersey's top law enforcement official said the state should be spending more, not less money to improve policing, as activists nationwide push cities to divert money from departments in the wake of George Floyd's death.

"The challenge when I hear 'defund the police' is: I need more funding," state Attorney General Gurbir Grewal said Wednesday during a webinar on police reform. Beefing up training was more important than ever, he said, especially when it came to preparing cops to interact with people having psychiatric episodes.

"Immediately withdrawing these types of resources from law enforcement puts them in an untenable position," he said, at least until the state improved its mental health care and created other agencies to respond to residents in crisis.

At the same time, Grewal said the state needed to embrace reforms to combat a "national systemic racism pandemic."

The comments came as the State Police face new questions about the shooting death of an unarmed man who had talked about being possessed and having paranormal experiences, and after New Jersey's largest city moved to shift more than \$11 million out of its public safety budget.

Grewal was joined on the webinar by J. Scott Thomson, the former head of Camden's police department, and Vanita Gupta, who used to lead the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division.

Thomson highlighted Camden's restrictive force policy, and he said increasing their department's size ultimately helped lower crime. He agreed hiring more cops was not the way to solve complex problems like homelessness, but he said officers were currently the only people who could quickly help a 911 caller in the middle of the night, regardless of the emergency.

Gupta highlighted reforms she's pushed for in Congress, including a national use-of-force standard and increased federal oversight of local departments. Years of poor funding for schools and health care had not only hurt Black communities, she said, but put unnecessary pressure on cops facing the poverty and crime those failed systems can create.

Grewal also highlighted ongoing reforms.

New Jersey will soon require all cops to be licensed and is rolling out a database to allow the public to track how local cops use force, and officials are asking for public feedback to re-write the rules for when officers are allowed to use pepper spray, guns and other types of force. Grewal recently endorsed releasing cops' disciplinary records, and he is fighting police unions in court to release names of some disciplined officers.