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Background:

In 2020, in the midst of a global pandemic and continued police violence against Black and Brown people, our chapter embarked on a process to determine a chapter-wide priority. Over the course of several months and through a democratic process, a campaign emerged: to defund the police and refund the community. The focus was on NJ's new 2 largest cities: Newark and Jersey City.

In Jersey City, the political environment allowed for a focus on a budget fight to defund the police, which though ultimately was defeated, it successfully mobilized our chapter. Also, the Hudson County branch mobilized to pass the marijuana legalization referendum.

In Newark, chapter members built relationships with many local organizations and grassroots groups. Political education events were held, as well as bringing together a coalition of groups for a meeting, where priority demands were brainstormed and compiled.

Because of these successes and the momentum we have built, it is proposed that this work remains a chapter-wide priority.

Priority:

Defund the Police (and the carceral state), Tax the Rich, & (Re)Fund the Community

- CCRB comprised of community representatives appointed by community with subpoena power, power to fire officers
- Ending Qualified Immunity
- Cops out of school
- Abolish ICE
- Non-police crisis response services (social workers not cops)
- Free Public Pre-K to College Education
- Green New Deal
- Homes for All

Doing this would allow us to unite our entire chapter, and various working groups, into a larger campaign and show how intersectional our work is. For example,

- CREW could take the lead on getting cops out of school and getting Pre-K to College Education
- Immigrant Justice Working Group could continue its amazing work to abolish ICE and end immigrant detention in Bergen, Essex, Hudson, and Union Counties and beyond
- Ecosocialist Working Group could build on the December panel and advance a Green New Deal, while supporting indigenous and environmental justice frontline groups
- Housing Justice Working Group could advance a Homes for All platform and organize tenants to move these demands

- Labor Working Group could organize workers to move these demands
- Media-Communications could continue to develop a cohesive media and communications strategy around this campaign
- Member Organizing could bring more DSA members into this campaign
- Electoral could support candidates that run on these demands, as well as support ballot initiatives that advance the demands. DSA members are already considering running for council in the November 2021 in Jersey City an May 2022 election in Newark.
- Mutual Aid could continue its existing efforts, while distributing materials that advance demands
- Political Education could host political education events on these demands, in partnership with appropriate working group