



**Eric D. Garrett Sr.**  
*Councilman-at-Large*  
January 7<sup>th</sup> 2026

Mayor Shammas Malik  
166 S. High St. 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl.  
Akron, Ohio 44308

Reference: \$255,000 “Patrol long-gun program” to militarize the streets of Akron

Dear Mayor Malik,

I am writing to express my deep concern and strong opposition to your recent position regarding what can only be described as Donald Trump-like moves to militarize our streets. Who on earth are you taking advice from? The audacity to suggest that all patrol officers be equipped with department-issued, military-style rifles is an affront to our community. This, sadly, appears to be your version of police reform, while simultaneously retaining the officer who modified a military-style assault weapon that was ultimately used in the killing of a child. To suggest that we take \$255,000 out of the capital budget, funds that could be directed toward youth, housing, or even the recently raised concerns surrounding Ms. Tiffany Foxworth’s plumbing debacle involving the city, is deeply troubling.

I firmly believe that had proactive police reform been implemented when promised, Jazmir Tucker would be alive today. This tragedy was not inevitable; it was preventable. Instead, we are left with a decision that adds more rifles while leaving intact the conditions, and individuals, that allowed this to happen in the first place. Banning personal long guns now, in the absence of accountability, feels less like reform and more like political theater, particularly in the shadow of an election. True reform is not about optics. It is about courage, consistency, and putting people before politics.

This decision speaks volumes, not only about priorities, but about leadership. At a time when we should be reducing the number of guns in our community, you are suggesting an increase. Banning personal long guns, while refusing to address the conduct of the individual who altered it is not accountability, it is deflection. This suggestion is reactive, not proactive, and it does nothing to address the deeper and far more dangerous issue: a culture within the department that lacks discipline, oversight, and meaningful consequences.

As a veteran who proudly served this country, I am familiar with weapons, including AR-15-style rifles and long guns. I understand their mechanics, their power, and the devastating impact modifications can have. The ability to modify a weapon, whether through optics, triggers, suppressors, or other enhancements, can significantly increase lethality. That reality cannot be ignored. Patrol officers are not SWAT units. Patrol or peace officers should not be equipped with specialized firearms, including machine guns, shotguns, sniper rifles, or AR-15-style assault rifles. While I understand the need to equip specialized units with the necessary tools to protect the community, this is not the answer. Equipping patrol officers with such weaponry is not justified.

Our residents deserve better, our children deserve better, and our city deserves leadership that is willing to confront the root causes of these outlandish requests to militarize Akron streets.

Respectfully Submitted,



Eric D. Garrett Sr.  
Councilman-at-Large

