

Kirsten Engel worked for a group that recently called for defunding the police. Now, gun crimes and violent crimes against law enforcement are on the rise in parts of Arizona.

BACKUP:

(NEWLY UPDATED ON 9/15/22) Kirsten Engel said she would support defunding the police:

- **NEW VIDEO: Engel said she would support defunding the police.** [MODERATOR] “Defund the police. Would you support a reduction in police budgets to fund social programs, and including a shift in some of police responsibilities to social workers? Let’s start with you, Representative Engel.” [ENGEL] “Uh, yeah. Hank, the way you’ve asked that question, I agree with it.” (Arizona Citizens Clean Elections Commission, “LD10 General Election Candidate Debate,” [YouTube](#), 9/16/20; 1:26:44-1:29:14) ([NRCC YouTube](#))
- **NEW VIDEO: Engel said she supports a “reallocation” of funding away from police budgets.** [ENGEL] “Yes, I would support a reallocation...” (Arizona Citizens Clean Elections Commission, “LD10 General Election Candidate Debate,” [YouTube](#), 9/16/20; 1:26:44-1:29:14) ([NRCC YouTube](#))

Kirsten Engel worked as an attorney for the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, which changed its name to Earthjustice in 1997:

- From 1990 to 1992, Engel worked as a staff attorney for the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund.

1990 – 1992: Staff Attorney, Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, Washington, D.C.

(Kirsten Engel Curriculum Vitae, [University of Arizona](#), Accessed 7/20/22)

- In 1997, the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund changed its name to Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund. “The Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund announced today that it is changing its name to Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund, effective immediately. The decision was made by unanimous vote of the group’s Board of Trustees meeting in Tiburon, California, on June 14.” (Press Release, “Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund Changes Name to Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund,” [Earthjustice](#), 6/14/1997)

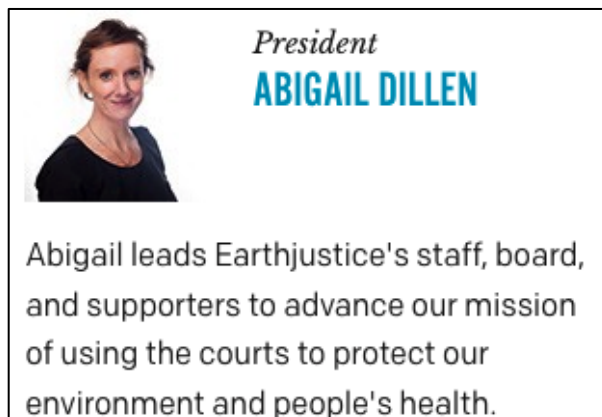
***Editor’s Note:** Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund is also [referred](#) to as Earthjustice.*

Earthjustice sided with defund the police activists who wanted to divert police budgets to mental health funding and community resources, and its president wants to “cut inflated police budgets”:

- Earthjustice sided with defund the police activists who wanted to divert police budgets to mental health funding and community resources. “One former staffer at Earthjustice, which does environmental law work, who was granted anonymity to discuss confidential interactions, said some funders have told the group to stick to what it knows. That person recalled battles with a member of the board of directors when Earthjustice tried to navigate statements on police brutality, where the group sided with ‘defund the police’ activists who

wanted to divert police budgets to mental health funding and community resources. Staff drove the shifts from the inside, the person said.” (Zack Colman, “Justice or overreach?: As crucial test looms, Big Greens are under fire,” [Politico](#), 6/21/22)

- In 2020, Abigail Dillen of Earthjustice wrote, “we need to narrow the focus of policing and cut inflated police budgets...” “There are essential measures that Congress must take to stop abuses and hold officers liable, and piecemeal reforms are not enough. In keeping with growing demands to defund the police, we need to narrow the focus of policing and cut inflated police budgets to invest instead in mental health services, violence-prevention, and all of the other community resources that will keep people safer than our current system of policing ever can.” (Abigail Dillen, “Environmental Justice Does Not Transcend Racial Justice,” [Earthjustice](#), 6/18/20)
 - Abigail Dillen is the President of Earthjustice.



(Abigail Dillen, “Environmental Justice Does Not Transcend Racial Justice,” [Earthjustice](#), 6/18/20)

- While discussing Earthjustice’s decision to side with defund the police activists, one former Earthjustice staffer said, “For the most part, people funding Earthjustice signed up to protect the polar bears, not defund the police.” “One former staffer at Earthjustice, which does environmental law work, who was granted anonymity to discuss confidential interactions, said some funders have told the group to stick to what it knows. That person recalled battles with a member of the board of directors when Earthjustice tried to navigate statements on police brutality, where the group sided with ‘defund the police’ activists who wanted to divert police budgets to mental health funding and community resources. Staff drove the shifts from the inside, the person said. ‘For the most part, people funding Earthjustice signed up to protect the polar bears, not defund the police,’ the person added.” (Zack Colman, “Justice or overreach?: As crucial test looms, Big Greens are under fire,” [Politico](#), 6/21/22)

Police say violent crimes are continuing to go up in Phoenix, and the commander of Phoenix police’s Violent Crimes Bureau said the city has seen an uptick in gun crimes; additionally, the Phoenix police chief said there had been a significant rise in rates of violent crime against law enforcement officers:

- Phoenix Police Chief Jeri Williams addressed a significant rise in rates of violent crime against law enforcement officers during an interview in March 2022, when he said Phoenix alone has seen a 31% increase in violence against officers. “Phoenix Police Chief

Jeri Williams addressed a significant rise in rates of violent crime against law enforcement officers during an in-studio interview on Monday. Williams talked about how in Phoenix alone, there has been a 31% increase in violence against officers. “It’s a disturbing trend and it isn’t just here. It’s across the country. At the end of the day, men and women are standing in the gap to protect our community, and this is just unacceptable,” Williams said. Chief Williams highlighted where two Phoenix officers were shot at while in their patrol car on Sunday.” (Dani Birzer, “Phoenix chief of police addresses rise in violent crime against officers,” [Arizona’s Family](#), 3/14/22)

- **Police say violent crimes are continuing to go up in Phoenix, and the commander of Phoenix police’s Violent Crimes Bureau said the city has seen an uptick in gun crimes.** “Police say violent crimes are continuing to go up in the City of Phoenix. ‘We have seen an uptick in gun crimes,’ Commander Warren Brewer of Phoenix police’s Violent Crimes Bureau said. It’s those crimes that Brewer and his investigators are trying to address. ‘We want the City of Phoenix to be a safe place for people.’ Brewer said more firearms were used in homicides in 2021 than in previous years.” (Colleen Sikora, “Gun crimes in Phoenix are up; police say steps they’re taking are helping catch perpetrators,” [12 News](#), 5/5/22)

Tucson had a record-breaking year for homicides in 2021, and a Tucson Police Department officer said crime has spiked in an area that TPD’s Southside Division is now “hyper-focused on...”:

- **Headline: “After a record-breaking year of homicides, Tucson police combat gun violence”**

After a record-breaking year of homicides, Tucson police combat gun violence

Jamie Donnelly Jan 9, 2022 Updated Feb 20, 2022

(Jamie Donnelly, “After a record-breaking year of homicides, Tucson police combat gun violence,” [Tucson.com](#), 2/20/22)

- **2021 was a record-breaking year for homicides in Tucson, with 93 homicides.** “2021 was a record-breaking year for homicides in Tucson, resulting in a tough year for the community as well as those directly affected. According to the Tucson Police Department, the city had 93 homicides last year. The former record was set in 2008 with 79 homicides. In 2020, Tucson recorded 68 homicides, and 2019 had 49 homicides.” (Jamie Donnelly, “After a record-breaking year of homicides, Tucson police combat gun violence,” [Tucson.com](#), 2/20/22)
- **Headline: “Violent crime spikes in southwest Tucson”**

Violent crime spikes in southwest Tucson

Tucson Police have increased patrols in areas of concern

(Valerie Cavazos, “Violent crime spikes in southwest Tucson,” [KOLD News 13](#), 7/15/22)

- **Tucson Police Department officer Frank Magos said crime has spiked in an area that TPD’s Southside Division is now “hyper-focused on...”** “TPD Public Information Officer Frank Magos said it’s not just that apartment. Crime has spiked in the entire area. ‘We have seen a rise in calls for service and high profile incidents that have happened such as a

homicide on Ajo Way and Holiday Isle,' Magos said. So now TPD's Southside Division is hyper-focused on this latest crime wave in that area." (Valerie Cavazos, "Violent crime spikes in southwest Tucson," [KOLD News 13](#), 7/15/22)