

# Albuquerque police face aftermath of Walgreens letter

Earlier in August, police chief Harold Medina sent a letter to the retail chain requesting it to have its own armed security and changes to store layouts



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The city of Albuquerque made a plea to retail chain **Walgreens, requesting its own armed security and readjusting store layouts.**

Target 7 looked into the request to see if it was a reasonable financial request for the retail chain.

Walgreens was sent a letter by Albuquerque Police Department Chief Harold Medina, which also requested the department have access to store surveillance cameras.

The letter was written and sent following the death of **23-year-old Sydney Wilson, who was shot and killed in a parking lot after she saw her stolen vehicle** and approached it.

Aaron Jones, with the armed security company International Protective Service, said APD should be doing more to protect businesses in Albuquerque.

"There's a lot of problems with this whole deal in general," Jones said. "For one, Walgreens is taxpayers, just like everybody else in the city of Albuquerque taxpayers. And taxes are supposed to pay for protection."

Jones also said Walgreens contacted him after receiving the letter. However, there were complications when pricing was discussed.

"It's not a cheap proposition at all, especially if you're hiring me," Jones said. I can guarantee you that, you know, we put millions of dollars into providing this type of service, and we do it for four different companies all over the country very effectively."

For Medina, he said the police department should not be directly involved with Walgreens stores for security.

"I'm here to say it is not the responsibility of the Albuquerque Police Department and the taxpayers of the city of Albuquerque to put an officer at every single Walgreens that sells alcohol," Medina said.

In the aftermath of Wilson's death, the city of **Albuquerque announced it would be suing Hyundai and Kia, citing 20% of the city's car thefts.** Jones said blaming the businesses for crime is not a police department's job.

"When you want to blame the stores, and you want to blame Hyundai for, you know, the crime going on, I'm sorry, I was a cop," Jones said. "We went out, and we dealt with crime and whatever. And I'm sorry for the things are going the way they are, but it's it seems a little ridiculous to me blaming these businesses."

In a press conference, Medina said five Walgreens stores accumulated roughly \$125,000 in taxpayer dollars for service calls over a six-month period. Target 7 looked into those police response calls at the store near Central Avenue and Eubank Boulevard.

We found there were 13 calls made for fights and assaults, two shootings and two thefts, along with dozens of disturbances.

Carla Sonntag with the New Mexico Business Coalition said many of its members have been forced to hire security at a hefty price.

"Some of our businesses are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars every year in order to try to protect their properties," Sonntag said.

The business coalition has started a legal fund; they want to sue Albuquerque for not enforcing lower-level crimes such as shoplifting and trespassing. In turn, this causes businesses to foot the bill to hire security services.

"It's not right. We shouldn't live in fear of our lives," Sonntag said. "We shouldn't have to question if we're able to go into a store and safely purchase goods."

**Accessed on 11/21/2023 from KOAT-7's website:** <https://www.koat.com/article/albuquerque-police-aftermath-walgreens-letter/44950582>