



ADVISORY COMMISSION ON POLICING

October 15, 2025

The Honorable John McCarthy
State's Attorney, Montgomery County
50 Maryland Avenue
5th Floor, North Tower
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Recovered Firearms from Vehicular Consent Searches

Dear State's Attorney McCarthy:

Thank you for your participation in our March 10 virtual public forum regarding the Montgomery County Police Department's (MCPD) new policy on consent searches during traffic stops. These public forums help us elicit direct feedback from members of our community and inform the county's conversation on public safety.

During the forum, you said that 80 percent of all guns recovered from Montgomery County were the result of Consent searches.¹ Members of the public noted your remarks and referred to them at our most recent public forum, held on September 8.

However, as consent searches are requested only in a very small portion of all traffic stops, the 80 percent estimate seems implausible.² The information we have from MCPD suggests that out of the more than 1,000 firearms recovered in the County in 2023, only 73 came from traffic stops, and of those, only 13 were seized as a result of consent searches.³

¹ Minute 12:14 of Advisory Commission on Policing Webinar on the Consent Search Policy, YouTube, March 10, 2025, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDosS6rLvqA&list=PLvk-7RcdeRpR5G5YOXbjnDE5KE1AL-nGy&index=5&t=762s>

² According to MCPD, there were approximately 83 requests to search during the 37,103 traffic stops conducted in CY 2023. Page 4, Police Accountability Board (PAB) Meeting Minutes, Freedom to Leave Act Meeting, July 2, 2024, at https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/pab/Resources/Files/minutes/PAB_July2_2024_minutes.pdf

³ In recent years, the number of firearms taken off the streets in Montgomery County from all sources, including turn-ins and through other agencies, ranged from a low of 826 and a high of 1,245. In 2023, the last full year before MCPD revised its consent search policy, the number was 1,010. Page 44, Montgomery County Police Department, 2024 Annual Report on Crime and Safety, at

In other words, the proportion of firearms taken off the streets as a result of vehicular consent searches is about one percent of all firearms recovered and 18 percent of firearms recovered during traffic stops.

We hope you would agree that accurate information is important to properly inform the public conversation on policing. Therefore, we would appreciate if you could clarify at your earliest convenience your March 10 remarks regarding the seizure of firearms from vehicular consent searches.

Sincerely,

Rev. Brian Bellamy
Chair, Advisory Commission on Policing

CC: County Council

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/pol/Resources/Files/Annual-Reports/CrimeandSafety/2024%20MCPD%20Annual%20Report%20on%20Crime%20and%20Safety.pdf>. In 2023, MCPD reported 73 Firearm Offenses from Traffic Incidents. Page 2, Farag, Susan J., Briefing: Montgomery County Police Department – Consent Search Policy, December 9, 2024, at https://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=169&clip_id=17696&meta_id=187185#:~:text=might%20otherwise%20remain%20undiscovered%2C%20aiding,other%20weapons. MCPD reports that 13 guns were recovered as a result of nine vehicular consent searches in 2023. Pages 5-6, Police Accountability Board (PAB) Meeting Minutes, Freedom to Leave Act Meeting, July 2, 2024, at https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/pab/Resources/Files/minutes/PAB_July2_2024_minutes.pdf