



ADVISORY COMMISSION ON POLICING

December 18, 2023

The Hon. Brooke E. Lierman, Esq.
Comptroller of Maryland
Goldstein Treasury Building
80 Calvert St., Annapolis, MD 21404-0466

Re: State funds distributed to Montgomery County and traffic citation revenue

Dear Comptroller Lierman:

Traffic enforcement is the most common context for police-civilian interactions in the community. There is a long history of concern about racially disproportional traffic stops. In various parts of the nation, the revenue from traffic citations is a major source of revenue for some jurisdictions. The Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, in its report on the investigation of the Ferguson, Missouri Police Department after the shooting of Michael Brown in 2014 found that municipal revenue relied upon the imposition of fines for traffic and other matters that were imposed on the residents in what it concluded was a racially disproportionate and unconstitutional manner.¹

The Montgomery County Advisory Commission on Policing, along with other police policy review efforts in the county, has been working on issues regarding traffic enforcement. We have been informed that the revenue from traffic citations issued by the Montgomery County Police Department (and presumably other police departments in the state) goes to the State of Maryland through the state court system.

The State annually provides critically important financial support to the local governments. Is any portion of the State's payments to counties computed on the basis of any kind of accounting or formula that considers the revenue the state receives from traffic-related fines generated by enforcement in that county? If so, the Advisory Commission on Policing would greatly appreciate it if you could please provide the formula used to determine the allocation of fine revenue transferred to the counties. If so, please provide an itemization of the sums from traffic-related fines that have been returned to Montgomery County for the 3 most recent years available. If possible, please provide the total amount of traffic-related fine revenue

¹ United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, *Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department*, March 4, 2015, https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/opa/press-releases/attachments/2015/03/04/ferguson_police_department_report.pdf

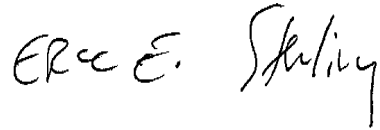
Advisory Commission on Policing

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received by the state from enforcement in Montgomery County for the same time periods. If you are unable to provide this information, we would like to know why not.

Thank you very much for assisting us in gathering this information. Please direct your response to the staff of the ACP, Susan J. Farag, Legislative Analyst, Montgomery County Council, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric E. Sterling". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eric E. Sterling, Chair
Montgomery County Advisory Commission on Policing

cc: Montgomery County Councilmembers
Montgomery County Police Chief Marcus Jones