



ADVISORY COMMISSION ON POLICING

December 11, 2025

The Honorable Natali Fani-González, President

Montgomery County Council

100 Maryland Avenue

Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Public Forum Held on September 8

Dear President Fani-González and Members of the County Council:

Congratulations, President Fani-González, on your election as Montgomery County Council President, and congratulations to Vice President Balcombe on your election as Council Vice President! Your leadership brings a renewed opportunity to strengthen collaboration between the Council and the Advisory Commission on Policing (ACP, "the Commission"). We look forward to working closely with both of you and with the full Council to advance thoughtful, equitable approaches to public safety and to support policies that reflect the needs and priorities of the entire community.

Pursuant to one of the priorities outlined in the Council's letter to the ACP on May 9, 2024, the Advisory Commission on Policing held a public forum on September 8 in the County Council Hearing Room. This in-person event provided an opportunity for community members to share their concerns regarding public safety and contributed meaningfully to the broader conversation on policing in our County. The input we received at the forum, along with comments submitted through our website, continues to inform our work. We've attached the excellent report on the proceedings prepared by the legislative staff assigned to the Commission.

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The ACP heard a wide range of perspectives from community members. Some participants expressed concern about police staffing gaps or constraints on officers, while others highlighted practices they viewed as biased or unhelpful. Parents spoke both about threats to their children in schools and the potential harms of overreliance on police. Many participants emphasized that public safety is closely linked to social services, mental health resources, and other County programs, highlighting the importance of coordinated approaches that address underlying needs and strengthen community well-being.

The Commissioners greatly appreciated these contributions. While the concerns reflect different viewpoints, they enhance one another, highlighting multiple dimensions of public safety that can be addressed together to build trust and well-being across Montgomery County. We recognize that these issues intersect with multiple areas of Council work including public safety, social services, public health, housing, and education; thus, benefit from coordination across committees, departments, and community partners. These issues also arise in the operating and capital budget processes, where alignment of priorities and resources, including investments in County services, is essential. This work is especially important at a time when many community members continue to feel fear or mistrust toward the police, making open dialogue and careful policy consideration even more critical.

We are grateful to the Council members who supported our public forum through attendance or participation of staff. Your engagement was meaningful to both the community members who spoke and to the Commission.

As you know, the Commission is tasked with providing guidance and thoughtful insights to the Council on matters of police policy and emerging issues in policing. We welcome opportunities to serve as a collaborative resource on any questions, priorities, or cross-committee matters, including those related to social services, operating and capital budgets, and other County programs that intersect with public safety.

We look forward to continuing our partnership to ensure that public safety policies are effective, equitable, and responsive to the needs of all Montgomery County residents, especially at a time when building trust and confidence in policing is more important than ever.

Sincerely,

Rev. Brian Bellamy, Chair, Advisory Commission on Policing

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CC: Dawn Luedtke, Chair, Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission
Michael Jimenez, Chair, Commission on Children and Youth
Hon. William England, Chair, Commission on Human Rights

Encl: Sept. 8, 2025 Public Forum Discussion Detail

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Discussion Detail

I. Call to Order and Attendance

- Ms. Farag provided some preliminary opening remarks. She recognized Councilmembers in attendance – Council President Stewart and Public Safety Chair Katz, as well as representatives from offices of CM Alborno, CM Friedson, and CM Sayles.
- Chair Bellamy called the meeting to order at 6:32PM. A quorum of ACP members was present. He introduced Vice Chairs Mr. González and Mx. Quittman.

II. Background

- Vice Chair González provided some background on the ACP. This included information about the history, composition, mission, responsibilities, and priorities, as well as a review of the ACP's work to date. This information is available in the slides available in conjunction with these minutes.
- Vice Chair González indicated that two members of the ACP have previous experience working as members of law enforcement, six members have completed the MCPD Citizens Academy, and a number of members have participated in ride-alongs with MCPD.
- Members of the ACP, including ex-officio members, introduced themselves.
- Vice Chair González clarified the distinction between the ACP and the Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee.

III. Listening Session

- Vice Chair Quittman moderated the public listening session.
- Mr. Elwood Gray spoke in favor of the institution of an Officer Friendly program within MCPD.
- Mr. Rob Landau spoke representing Silver Spring Justice Coalition (SSJC). SSJC is particularly impressed with some of the ACP's comments regarding MCPD policies, especially on the use of force and community policing. Mr. Landau spoke in favor of a comprehensive legislative approach to surveillance technology in the County, including guarding against its potential misapplication and misuse. He spoke in favor of Bill 4-25 as such an approach.
- Ms. Robin Yasnow spoke, also representing SSJC. She noted that there will be seven concurrent mobile crisis teams up and running within the County during peak hours. She urged the ACP to support the dispatch of mobile crisis teams to all incidents in which an

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individual is known or suspected to have a mental health condition, even when the individual has a weapon, and to support the involvement of MCPD officers only when necessary. She expressed that responders should speak the primary language of the individual to whom they are responding. Ms. Yasnow expressed concerns about the pilot co-response team.

- Vice Chair Quittman indicated that the ACP may have more information regarding the areas spoken to by representatives of SSJC in the months to come.
- Mr. Mark Disler spoke in favor of identifying ways to increase police staffing in the County. He urged the ACP to rescind its letter of support for the Freedom to Leave Act and suggested that the ACP advise MCPD to repeal some of its new policies regarding consent searches, especially in light of State's Attorney McCarthy's comments regarding the high proportion of illegal weapons retrieved through consent searches.
- In response to Mr. Disler's comments, Vice Chair Quittman indicated that the ACP had reviewed data indicating that other jurisdictions in the country had eliminated consent searches and that violent crime had not significantly increased in the County over the past two years.
- Ms. Branson expressed appreciation for Mr. Disler's comments regarding the need for increased staffing. She further noted that the Freedom to Leave Act did not pass the Council despite the ACP's support.
 - Mr. Disler subsequently responded to indicate that while the bill did not pass, his view is that the ACP played a role in MCPD's adoption of a policy limiting consent searches.
- Ms. Daphnis added her view that MCPD should engage in recruitment tactics that engage in an atmosphere of community policing.
- Mr. Blair noted evidence of systemic racial bias in application of consent searches and suggested that this indicated a larger problem with the practice of consent searches.
- Mr. George noted that there is a recruitment swell in policing for the first time since 2020.
- Mr. Aaron Droller from Silver Spring spoke in favor of reinstituting the School Resource Officer (SRO) program. He expressed his view that the replacement program, the Community Engagement Officer (CEO) program, is inadequate. He expressed concern that children who attend private schools experience a greater level of security than individuals who attend public schools.
- Ms. Walsh indicated that the ACP is seeking balance between different viewpoints on the SRO issue and expressed her appreciation for Mr. Droller's comments.
- Vice Chair Branson indicated that the ACP has continued to have good conversations with representatives of MCPD, including Lt. Innocenti, who runs the CEO program. She noted that violence has not increased in schools.
- Mr. Droller responded that SROs could address counterfactual concerns in the event of mass violence in schools.
- Dr. Sheryl Brissett Chapman of Silver Spring spoke regarding juvenile justice. She expressed appreciation for the ACP's initiative regarding safety in schools. She expressed concern about

African American males' safety in schools and emphasized racial justice in the definition of public safety. She asked the ACP to do an impact analysis on how each decision or recommendation would impact Black male children.

- Several ACP commissioners either welcomed or expressed support for Dr. Chapman's comments.
- Ms. Valerie Davis, the convener of the Black Coalition for Excellence in Education, spoke. She associated herself with Dr. Chapman's comments. She requested: (1) that the ACP look at the culture and climate survey results that were released by MCPS; (2) that the ACP oppose MCPS's daily searches of students without cause; (3) that the ACP ask that the Chief of Safety & Security at MCPS follow the memorandum of understanding (MOU) of the CEO program and seek to revise the MOU; (4) that the ACP support the Coalition's first responder program; (5) that the ACP support an investment in restorative justice in MCPS.
- Ms. Andrea Kronzek provided comment. She noted that there may be some additional context to statistics regarding officer-involved shootings, and that not all emergency calls are immediately identifiable as mental health calls. She complemented MCPD's response to calls involving children with autism. She noted that some MCPD officers can be mentors to children in schools. The speaker expressed her support and appreciation for officers of the MCPD. She challenged what she characterized as the ACP's preconceived notion of police. She further spoke in defense of officers who use force in the line of duty. She expressed a belief that commissioners should be required to participate in ride-alongs, attend the Citizens Academy, and view all Public Safety Committee worksessions.
- Mr. Elias Baylor spoke representing Fox 5 in Bethesda. He inquired regarding the encryption of police radio communications. Ms. Branson indicated that the ACP was concerned about the encryption practice because press would not have access to police communications. Vice Chair González indicated that the Commission is in the process of finalizing their position on this issue.
- Ms. Davis spoke again to encourage the ACP to advise the County's elected leaders to object to the federal government's targeting of Black youth.

IV. Adjournment

- Chair Bellamy thanked the public for participating in the public forum. He thanked Council staff for their support and noted that individuals can leave additional comments via the public comment form on the ACP website.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00PM.