

Hello,

My name is Andrew I live in Montgomery County, and I am deeply concerned about your request to the County Council to postpone the hearing for Bill 46-20, the SRO Removal Bill. I know the Board of Education is having a meeting about SROs on Thursday, February 4th in the afternoon, but their meeting should have no impact on the public hearing. The hearing has been on the schedule since November and I am concerned this postponement disregards public opinion. 30 people are signed up to testify live on February 4, with many more signed up for the waiting list. Those people want their opportunity to tell the Council that the children of Montgomery County need counselors and not cops in their schools, especially when they come back to school after experiencing the trauma of the pandemic. I urge you to contact Council President Tom Hucker to ask that the hearing be reinstated for the original date and time - January 12 at 7:30 pm.

I have seen firsthand what the lack of empathy does to our youth. When attending Blake High School, there were so many opportunities for the staff to connect with us when disturbances happened, however the "prison pipeline"

method was always enforced. Even when there was no distance, there was a "law & order" atmosphere. I was a half day student my senior year & often when I would leave school property, I would be questioned by an officer on duty at the school, hardly ever was it a teacher or counselor. That set the tone to let me know, that we were feared as children, when we really needed to be nurtured. I come from a decent home however, that doesn't negate the problems I had in my home.

Coming to school was sometimes a get away from the drama at home, so to be seen as a criminal or potential hazard was an uncomfortable feeling. Many children have extremely toxic environments they reside in. Having police officers in the school will only criminal or potential hazard was an uncomfortable feeling. Many children have extremely toxic environments they reside in. Having police officers in the school will only further that toxicity into the community that they're attempting to participate in. The adult brain isn't even developed fully until age 25, yet children can suffer life altering consequences as adult for actions committed as children. More empathy is needed in many of these situations. Leave the police to catch real bad guys & real criminals. Let's put the many counselors provided to the community to work on the minds of the youth rather than the police to confine them.

