

Anita Lampel  
Bethesda, MD

**Testimony in Support of Bill 46-20  
SRO Removal - February 4, 2021**

Dear County Council President Hucker and County Council Members,

My name is Anita Lampel. I am a resident of Montgomery County's District I and a member of Jews United for Justice.

Councilmembers Jawando and Reimer understand that School Resource Officers (SROs) do not provide the security and support needed for our Montgomery County students. Their well-reasoned statements in Bill 46-20 are echoed exactly in the findings of the Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight's Racial Equity and Social Justice impact statement, which you have also received. Both these documents list the excellent research that supports the conclusion that School Resource Officers should be removed from schools.

Instead, support services, such as After School Youth Support and Engagement, Therapeutic Recreation Services for Youth, and Restorative Justice programs reduce the criminalization of teenage mistakes and bring racial equity and equity for students who are differently abled to the front of how Montgomery County serves its youth.

The Council has already made a giant step towards funding these programs, but needs to do much more.

I have a Ph.D. from Stanford University in Psychology and served as the department head of the child-adolescent mental health program for a large county. In that capacity, and later in private practice, I sat on numerous boards involving juvenile justice, the interface between courts and support services, and how to properly assess and assist youth who were troubled.

I went to juvenile halls and juvenile detention facilities, group homes, and psychiatric hospitals for youth. The teens I saw were troubled, sometimes suicidal, frightened, frequently seriously behind in reading and math abilities, often differently abled, hyperactive, and in need of medical

and dental help. The teens I saw could have used help—and not criminalization—much earlier in their lives.

The bill that is before you today will intervene in the school to prison pipeline and will work to keep students in school, without the stigma of a juvenile arrest.

Results of a major study of SROs in schools show that graduation rates and college attendance decrease when SROs are involved in high schools<sup>1</sup>. In contrast, studies on the impact of properly implemented Restorative Justice programs show remarkable positive findings in student retention, satisfaction, and graduation rates<sup>2</sup>. These are summarized, also, in the Montgomery County's Office of Legislative Oversight report presented to you.

The right, equitable, thoughtful act is for you, now, to vote in favor of Bill 46-20. We count on you to act based on facts, on studies, on data, and on your commitment to racial equity.

Thank you,

Anita Lampel

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<sup>1</sup> Weisbart, Emily K. Patrolling Public Schools: The Impact of Funding of School Police on Student Discipline and Long Term Educational Outcomes. Luskin School of Public Affairs, Dept. of Public Policy, University of California at Los Angeles, October, 2018

<sup>2</sup> Fronius, Trevor, et al. Restorative Justice in US Schools: A Research Review. West Ed, February 2016