

Testimony in Support of Bill 46-20/ SRO Removal Bill

Hearing Date: January 12, 2021

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Council

District: 5

I am writing to express my support for Bill 46-20, the SRO Removal Bill.

There are many statistics that document the fact that police officers do not decrease violence in schools or make schools safer places for students. No doubt, you are familiar with many of these statistics so I won't repeat them here. If the Council were to vote strictly based on available data, you could not build a case for keeping police officers in schools.

Morally and ethically, police do not belong in schools. Their presence has been documented to make Black students feel less safe in schools and to lead to increases in arrests and excessive discipline for minor offenses. Together, these factors create school climates that aren't conducive to learning and in fact end up pushing Black and Latino students out of school.

As a white parent of a 17-year-old son, I don't worry when I send him off to school or out in the world that a chance encounter with the police might change the trajectory of his life or, worse, leave him dead. But I know that Black parents don't have that comfort.

At the very least, public schools in Montgomery County should be places where parents can send their children and have confidence that students will both feel safe and be safe. While the County has a legitimate interest in keeping schools safe for students, teachers, and staff, stationing police officers in schools is not the way to accomplish that goal. Alternative strategies, including restorative justice practices, conflict resolution training for students, and hiring more counselors, psychologists, and social workers in schools, can help to address the root causes of violence in schools and create school climates that are more nurturing and affirming for all students.

I urge you to support Bill 46-20 and remove police officers from Montgomery County Public Schools.