

Rudy Logan

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Montgomery County District 5

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF Bill 46-20, Police - School Resource Officers - Prohibited
(February 4, 2021)

Hi, I would like to thank the honorable Montgomery County Council for holding this necessary hearing. My name is Rudy Logan, and I live in Silver Spring in District 5. This testimony is in support of Bill 46-20. On behalf of IMPACT Silver Spring, I am here to express the positive implications removing School Resource Officers would have on our Black, Brown, and disabled youth. I have numerous reasons that support this bill from a professional and personal perspective to share as part of this testimony.

The data highlighting the racial disparities amongst those arrested by SRO's conveys that this is an issue of racial injustice. In recent times, Montgomery County has striven to grow as a progressive region pertaining to racial equity and social justice issues. Here, before us presents an excellent opportunity to improve the lives of our marginalized youth of color.

The proposal to remove School Resource Officers from MCPS is an aspiration to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline. Such an endeavor has the potential to spark life-long positive outcomes for our youth. This bill gives us the chance to help our children live with greater security and healthier foundations. Providing therapeutic-based interventions on their behalf now will impede unnecessary criminalization, denial of opportunities, and cycles of violence that persist well into adulthood.

Second, a significant number of our youth who are arrested by SRO's are disabled. It is a violation of our disabled youth's dignity to respond to their challenges with punishment rather than therapeutic practices. Working in prison and a day habilitation center, I have witnessed how Black youth with disabilities are disproportionately criminalized. I have heard heart-wrenching stories from imprisoned people concerning their abuse as young children with mental health issues and economic disadvantages. They often have attested to me that if someone intervened with restorative justice-based practices during their formative years, then maybe a prison sentence would never have been their reality.

Juvenile arrest is counterproductive to the overall economy of a County that is represented by a majority of people of color and perpetuates cycles of imprisonment, injustice, and violence. Each arrest marks greater difficulty for our youth to improve the quality of their own lives and be in service to the community's collective needs. As adults, we are tasked with orienting our children towards hopeful and brighter futures. Removing School Resource Officers from MCPS and investing in restorative justice-based practices would foster an improved learning environment for our disabled, Black and Brown youth. I believe that supporting Bill 46-20 would be an instrumental move towards achieving a more racially equitable Montgomery County.

Thank you for your time. I respectfully urge you to support Bill 46-20.