

**TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HR-46-20
(CORRECTED COPY---PLEASE DISREGARD THE PREVIOUS SUBMISSION)**

HR 46-20 would eliminate the School Resource Officer Program in Montgomery County Schools. This bill is overwhelmingly and fiercely opposed by many including yours truly.

The proffered reason for the bill is that there is a disparity between Black/Latino and White students arrests and that incarceration was more likely of Black/Latino students as compared to White.

The arithmetic applied in the analysis, with regard to student arrests, is wrong.

The proper approach requires more than just a comparison of the raw numbers alone. Rather they should be considered in conjunction with the offense at issue. In other words, if the number of Blacks/Latinos and Whites committed the same type of crime and substantially more Blacks/Latinos were arrested than Whites, then there would be legitimate basis for concern.

However, if more Blacks/Latinos committed the same type of crime as Whites, there would naturally be more arrests of Blacks/Latinos. As for incarcerations, that is the province of the courts.

The bill suggests that the reason there are more arrests of Blacks/Latinos is because the SRO's are present. The facts are quite to the contrary. There are numerous instances where the presence of the SRO prevented situations that lead to arrests. Students are able to approach them with issues as well as the SRO acting on their own observations to prevent and solve problems right there in the school community.

The effect of this bill is comparable to defunding the police. That stance is opposed by many in the minority communities . As Robert Woodson, director of the Woodson Center has stated "solutions exist where the problems exist and no one should prioritize race grievance training over helping communities in need". That is in large part the function of the SRO's. Students are able to approach them with issues and the SRO can act on observations thus preventing and solving problems right there in the school community.

More to the point, if the SRO's are removed and lives are lost in violence that they could have stopped or prevented, this County Council will bear the responsibility. The County Council will have to explain to a parent the reason their child, Black or White, was injured or murdered because of some inappropriate sense of equity.

**Sincerely,
Hessie L. Harris**