

Good evening, my name is Tara Dunderdale and I am representing the Montgomery County DSA.

I am asking the council to vote no on Bill 7-21. This bill gives additional resources and power to an already racist and harmful program, and frankly, is just embarrassing.

I don't know what else you could hear from the community that hasn't been said. Dozens of advisory councils, student and community organizations, parents, teachers, and residents have spoken about the harm caused by the presence of police in schools. You have mountains of statistical evidence to show the SRO program is racist and ableist.

With so many people telling you this program is harmful, I can only assume those of you who want to continue and expand the presence of police in our schools either don't care about that harm or are actively interested in perpetuating it.

Since you continue to ignore the community perhaps you will heed your own words:

This council unanimously declared racism a public health crisis and committed to, and I quote "promoting racial equity and social justice through all policies approved by the Council"^[1]. The Racial Impact statement for bill 7-21 says it will not further the cause of racial justice explicitly because it retains the SRO program. On that alone you should vote no.

Council Member Rice, On racism you said, "It's something that has to stop,"^[2] Council Member Katz, quote "We need to make sure that all our residents have the same opportunities for positive health outcomes."^[3] CouncilMember Glass, you said "Now the work begins to look at the decades of and centuries of laws, regulations, policies that have targeted our communities of color,"^[4] Council Member Navarro, your committed to, "put forth legislation that would be an instrument...to dismantle...disparities faced by...people of color."^[5] Council Vice President Alborno, you said "We can't expect people who are disproportionately impacted by...structural racism to continue to adjust to that structure."^[6] Council Member Friedson, On Juneteeth last year you said we need to quote, "recognize...the work continues to ensure that all rights are extended equally to everyone."^[7]

Council Members Jawando, Reimer, and Council President Hucker, I hope your sponsorship and support of Bill 46-20 to prohibit SROs means you can see through this transparent attempt to undermine the immediate need to get police out of our schools..

If this council stands by your statements on the need to engage in the work of dismantling racist structures, then you must publicly support and vote for police free schools. Any other action is just cowardice and rank hypocrisy.

[1]

https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccllms/DownloadFilePage?FileName=9705_1_10713_Resolution_19-493_Adopted_20200616.pdf

[2] <https://bethesdamagazine.com/bethesda-beat/government/county-council-declares-racism-a-public-health-crisis/>

[3] <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MDMONTGOMERY/bulletins/29006ac>

[4] <https://bethesdamagazine.com/bethesda-beat/government/county-council-declares-racism-a-public-health-crisis/>

[5]

<https://worksourcemontergy.com/blogs/our-statement-on-racial-equity-and-social-justice/>

[6] <https://www.localdvm.com/news/i-270/montgomery-county-passes-resolution-to-make-racism-a-public-health-emergency/>

[7] https://twitter.com/Andrew_Friedson/status/1273990080361791490