

Joseph Reinhard  
OPPOSED - Proposing Amendments

Good evening, Councilmembers. My name is Joe Reinhard and I am a member of Young People for Progress, one of nearly 30 local groups in the Montgomery County Defund and Invest in Community Coalition. Our aim is to create public safety that works for all members of our community. Having previously worked for a law enforcement agency, I have personal experience with our current system of public safety and unfortunately, I know it fails too many Americans. I am here tonight to recommend additional cuts specifically to our police traffic enforcement budget and the reallocation of those funds to efforts proven to increase traffic safety for all pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

The problem is clear and laid out by our own OLO: despite making up just 18% of our population, Black people account for more than 30% of all traffic stops and more than half of all of MCPD's use of force cases. Black men in particular are 3 times more likely to be stopped than white men like myself.

If our County is truly dedicated to a system that prioritizes safety, we can do a few simple things better. Councilmember Glass said it best: housing violations are processed by our housing department and health violations are processed by our health department. Now let's focus on our transportation department handling transportation safety. We urge the Council to accept the County Executive's own task force findings by immediately reducing the number of police in traffic enforcement by 50% and begin moving functions away from police. After all, as the County doubles the amount of traffic cameras we have this year, doesn't it make sense that we should also be reducing the number of police involved in traffic safety?

You all have an opportunity with the budget to show your dedication to racial justice and public safety in one move. For too long, society has asked police to solve too many of its problems. Now we have a chance to create lasting public safety, reduce police racial injustice, and allow police to focus on duties that better serve the community. It truly is a win-win situation.

Thank you.