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On Behalf of the Silver Spring Justice Coalition

**Bill 19-21 - Settlement Agreements - Testimony in Support with Amendments**

My name is Ilhan Cagri and I am testifying on behalf of the Spring Spring Justice Coalition; a coalition of community members, faith groups, and civil and human rights organizations from throughout Montgomery County. We envision a state and county where community and individual needs for safety are met while harm by police is eliminated. The Coalition supports Bill 19-21 because it furthers our goal of increasing transparency around police misconduct. However, we believe the bill can go further.

First, the bill should require reports by the County Attorney to the Council and the County Executive when a legal claim is filed against the County based on allegations of wrongdoing by a member of any law enforcement department.

Second, the bill should require the County Attorney to publish on its website, information relating to all legal claims based on allegations of misconduct by a member of a law enforcement department. This information should go back for at least the past five years and should be regularly updated at all stages of litigation.

Third, consistent with the Office of Legislative Oversight's recommendation, published information should include demographic information regarding the claimants and the employees accused of misconduct.

Fourth, this bill should clarify that the County will abide by recent judicial precedent prohibiting police misconduct settlements from including non-disclosure agreements.

It is often the case that we learn about serious allegations of police harm only because someone sued the County and the media reported on that suit. This happened with the Miller and Faulk-Foster family, held unlawfully on the side of the road for over an hour in 2019. It happened with the Palma

family, terrorized in their own home in 2020. And it happened with the 5-year-old boy who was brutalized by police at East Silver Spring Elementary School.

We cannot rely on the media or wait until a case has been settled to learn about it. How can we hold our police and our elected officials accountable if we don't know about misconduct until the end of a long legal process? We appreciate this bill but we urge you to adopt our recommended amendments so that both the public and our County leaders can have the information we need to advocate for our most vulnerable community members.

Thank you.