



Testimony on Montgomery County Council Expedited Bill 49-21 Police Accountability Board

Good evening President Albornoz and members of the Council.

My name is Djawa Hall and I am the Political Coordinator for 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East MD/DC - which represents 12,000 healthcare workers in almost every stage of the healthcare delivery process in the state. Given the need to better hold police in this county and in our state more accountable for their misconduct when it occurs, we are not in support of this bill.

For 1199SEIU members who work or live in the County like myself, this legislation is of great importance. Not only do our members want to know that they are being policed with standards and procedures that reflect the input and needs of the community, but that they live in a county that includes true racially equitable practices in those standards.

They want to know that when the rules are broken, there is a real process to correct wrongs being done in our communities, and that there will not be a heavy handed influence of police officers involved in that process.

The exclusion of community members, particularly from the PAB, conflicts with the intent of the new state law- House Bill 670- which replaced the outdated and biased ' Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights'.

While advocates fought for a law that would allow for enforceable civilian oversight of policing, that is not what we got. However, the PAB, a board with oversight but not enforcement powers, populated by members of the community, was the compromise; this board was intended to ensure true community involvement in the disciplinary process. This version of this bill 49-21 does not accomplish that.

This bill requires members of the boards to have experience:

-managing or evaluating the management of law enforcement agency,

-evaluating citizen complaints against police officers

-and personnel disciplinary experience in proceedings as a manager, employee representative, mediator or arbitrator.

That's a pretty high bar to reach if you are an everyday working person. There should be a means for regular non law enforcement people to be a part of this process.

Passing this legislation would not ensure that residents are able to build a better rapport with the police department and thus, would not build more trust between residents and police officers.

For these reasons, we believe that this bill will not create the necessary structures for a true Police Accountability Board - and we cannot support this bill. Thank you for your time.

Djawa Hall
Political Coordinator
1199SEIU UHWE