

Fran Zamore  
Chevy Chase, MD

**Testimony Against Unless Amended - Bill 49-21 (Enabling Legislation for Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee)**

**January 18, 2021**

My name is Fran Zamore. I live in Chevy Chase, Maryland in District 1. This testimony is to oppose MC Bill 49-21, which would establish a Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee, unless it is significantly amended in order to strengthen the bill. I am testifying on behalf of myself and I am an active member of the Montgomery County Racial Equity (MORE) Network.

I believe that all people should be approached with respect and dignity. Indeed, there is a basic Jewish teaching that all people are created in the image of the Divine. This underlying value led me to be involved in advocating for the passage of the Racial Equity and Social Justice Act in 2019. I organized house parties to help generate input and promote the bill. The bill favorably passed in 2019, but there is still much work to do to ensure that a Racial Equity and Social Justice lens applies to all areas of our County government – especially in policing, where police disproportionately stop, arrest, and harm Black members of our community with seemingly no accountability.

The intent of the State law which mandates new Police Disciplinary Boards is to provide some civilian oversight of the police force. Bill 49-21, however, flies in the face of the stated intent of the bill. I ask that the Council substantially amend Bill 49-21 to reflect the concerns of the Bill's powerful Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement.

I was very moved by the OLO's finding "***that Expedited Bill 49-21 sustains racial and social inequities as the police accountability system it proposes neither aligns with best practices nor meaningfully provides civilian oversight for the County's system of police discipline.***" The OLO explains that "***the PAB [Bill 49-21] proposes is analogous to the current police accountability system.***"

As the OLO explains, "*For any civilian oversight agency to succeed, experts advise that three conditions are essential: 1) Independence from the police department so the civilian agency's recommendations can be trusted 2) Power so law enforcement cannot ignore the civilian oversight agency's recommendations 3) Resources to meet civilian oversight agency goals in a timely-fashion (e.g. investigate cases, issue reports)*"

**Bill 49-21 fails to meet these three conditions.** I urge you to vote against Bill 49-21 in its current form and hope that you will support strong amendments to make it more in line with the original stated intent and recommendations of the RESJ Impact Statement, ensuring real community oversight of police accountability.

Respectfully,  
Fran Zamore