

Members of the County Council,

Thank you for accepting my written testimony about the county's operational budget. The ongoing pandemic has caused trauma and harm to thousands of County residents who lost family members, homes, and jobs, and whose mental health has worsened as a result. We are in an ongoing crisis, and we need substantial investments in a Just Recovery and real community care — not the creation of a new MCPD Community Resources Bureau.

I strongly oppose the new MCPD Community Resources Bureau and its \$5.5 million budget. I agree that police officers are overworked and overstretched, but the answer to this is not to ask them to do even more, certainly not within schools. Yet the Community Resources Bureau will only further expand the role of police in schools and in the community that is beyond the scope of police officers' duties. Montgomery County has a robust nonprofit infrastructure that is better positioned to serve that role in our community, and the \$5.5 million would be much better spent strengthening those critical organizations. I also worry that, frankly, entrenching these resources in the police budget will make it harder to put them where they should be in the future, expanded social work and mental health resources, etc. Budgets are sticky documents, for better and worse. This is the time to correct this error, not later.

For these same reasons I also strongly oppose the CEO 2.0 program that is part of the new bureau. I, like you, want all of our students to be safe at school. But police presence has been proven to worsen outcomes for school safety and data shows that stationing police in schools perpetuates the school-to-prison pipeline and the criminalization of our youth.

Rather than these harmful programs, I urge you to fund the personnel and programs that are proven to support our community's wellbeing, specifically:

- Funding for full coverage by the Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams (MCOT), which includes three teams in each of the county's six police districts.
- Funding for mental health and restorative justice supports for MCPS students, including a restorative justice coordinator at each MCPS high school and middle school, and the extension of mental health supports to our County's 40 middle schools.
- Funding for aid to renters. Our County's emergency rent stabilization will expire on May 15, and we must be ready to support the thousands of tenants at risk of homelessness and displacement as it winds down. I supported this measure proudly, though I understand that it cannot continue forever. Even as someone who supports anti-rent gouging measures, I think a long term rent stabilization policy needs to be substantially looser than this law, but that doesn't mean that we don't have to provide alternative resources to help those that are about to lose this temporary protection. Thankfully the state passed a lot of needed protections this past session, but the county still needs to do its part. Whether it's funding for supportive organizations and charities, or direct aid, a lot of people will need help from the county.

- Full funding for the 10% increase needed to strengthen the nonprofit safety net, which should apply to community grants and contracts in all departments.

Finally, while it's likely more of an issue for the CIP budget, which I already submitted testimony about, I also strongly urge the council to reject County Executive Elrich's inclusion of the Chevy Chase library on the list of libraries to be refreshed via the library refurbishment level of effort Capital Improvement Program CIP, and instead make sure these funds are used to help leverage affordable housing on the site . The Chevy Chase library is a perfect site for desperately needed affordable housing near multiple forms of transit and in a wealthy, expensive enclave. The council should not approve a budget item that misses this opportunity with a simple renovation.

The budget is a reflection of our values as a community, and this is a critical time to invest in the supports that our county truly needs. I know these decisions are hard, and I thank you for taking the time to listen to my thoughts.

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