

Opposition to the FY22 Operating Budget, Department of Police, Covid-19 ARPA Relief Funds

My name is Jo Shifrin, I'm a resident of Bethesda, County #1 and I am writing to oppose the \$731,125 Covid-19 ARPA supplement to the Department of Police Operating Budget for FY22. The U.S. Department of the Treasury, in its implementing regulations, provided examples of how the ARPA gun violence prevention money might be used. It did not suggest it be given to Police Departments. Instead, it recommended options such as investing in support for Community Violence Intervention Programs, street- and hospital-based violence interruption models, including wraparound services that address the causes of violence through behavioral therapy, trauma recovery, job training, education, housing and relocation services, and financial assistance. **PLEASE NOTICE: the suggestions for how to spend this money are all focused on community-based approaches to reducing gun violence.** Why, then, would the Council think it appropriate to give the money to the Montgomery County Police Department?

Let me be specific:

- The County is proposing to give \$471,875, nearly two-thirds of this Federal allocation, to the Montgomery County Police Department to fund a new Violent Crime Information Center. The Center's purpose would be to track weapons, generate violent crime statistical reports, and conduct analyses for the MCPD Command Staff. The MCPD cannot fill the positions it is currently budget for and giving these funds to a new police unit which will target individuals (i.e., likely young Black and brown men) for police initiatives, will not reduce gun violence but will perpetuate tension between minority communities and the police. **The money would be far better spent offering job training and education programs through HHS' Community Action Agency Partners.**
- The County is proposing to give \$156,250 for a Gun Violence Intervention Initiative. As you indicate, "...the practice requires partnerships Street Outreach Network in HHS..." and a portion is "...to hire two hospital navigators...at Suburban Hospital." Why are you funding the Police Department? **The funds should go to HHS for distribution to community-based organizations.**
- The County is proposing to give \$37,500 for Youth and Family Violence Prevention. **The money would be better spent going directly to the Family Justice Center and the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council.**
- The County is proposing to give \$65,500 for the Midnight Madness Activities Program Pilot. **Since you are proposing that the work be done by the Recreation Department at one of the recreation centers, what is the purpose of funneling the funds through the MCPD?**

It is very clear what these funds are for: community-based programs for gun violence prevention. Your job is to give this money to those organizations –not the MCPD—which are best able to do this work.

Thank you for your consideration.