

Dear Members of the County Council.

I write today to express my opposition to Councilman Jawando's Bill 12-23, Police – Traffic Stops – Limitations (The Safety and Traffic Equity in Policing (STEP) Act). I am a Native American attorney and Vice Chair of the Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee. I am speaking in my personal capacity.

While I support the goal of the legislation, reducing police misconduct and racial disparities in policing, and I support the legislative direction to collect additional data Councilmember Jawando's legislation to prohibit police officers from engaging in stops for certain traffic offenses makes the community less safe.

We have seen rising violent crime throughout the community. We have seen rising property crime through the community. Over the weekend four men stole the catalytic converter off my elderly neighbors Toyota Prius which was parked in their driveway. Preventing police officers from engaging with members of the community for any reason is not just bad policy, it is reckless policy that will only embolden criminals to further engage in criminal behavior. We have witnessed the consequences of decriminalizing faregate jumping by the Washington DC Council and seen fare evasion rise throughout the Metro system. Preventing police officers from stopping vehicles with expired license plates will only encourage scofflaws to further ignore laws and licensing requirements of the Motor Vehicle Code that were implemented to encourage safety.

I want to see more police on our streets and more traffic enforcement by police. Automated traffic enforcement is a dereliction of government responsibility and on lines corporate pockets. Traffic enforcement is our beat police in a mobile urban society. In order to combat crime we need to give police more ability to engage with drivers of all races. The solution to disparate policing is proper training and enforcement in all areas of the county. Start an initiative to target expired tags in Bethesda and Chevy Chase. Don't handcuff our police officers ability to engage criminals wherever they find them.

Respectfully,

Jared Hautamaki