

Testimony by Pierre Romand  
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I was born in Africa in 1959  
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### **Bill 12-23, Police - Traffic Stops - Limitations (The STEP Act)**

This radical bill, unsurprisingly sponsored by councilmembers Jawando and Mink, pushes Montgomery further down the path of lawlessness. I moved here in 2007 and for the first time ever, my local Giant grocery store on University Boulevard now has **armed security** protecting the store. So this issue is no longer theoretical. It right there under our noses when we go grocery shopping.

For those of us living here, we cannot help but wonder when we will end up looking like Portland or San Francisco.

Even the County Council's own legislative analyst reports that the Montgomery County police is critically understaffed as a slew of reforms to undercut police effectiveness have already been voted and several more, including this one, are coming down the pipeline. Understaffing is expected to worsen with no end in sight. At that rate, there will be no need to worry about traffic stops: sooner or later, there won't be any officers available to make traffic stops.

As quality of life deteriorates, people are voting with their feet, with Montgomery County seeing population declines two years in a row, in 2020 and 2021 according to the Census Bureau. We all know this means higher taxes and the vicious cycle of lower population/tax hikes has already begun.

A recent article in the Daily Mail highlights the number of stores used by all of us for basic necessities that are closing their doors in radical woke jurisdictions due to exploding rampant crime: in the past 2 years, Walmart closed 17 stores across 9 states, including in the poorest areas of Chicago. There are no Walmart left in Portland. Target is closing 4 stores, including one in Maryland due to rampant crime. Count also Walgreens, Macys and many other smaller stores. Imagine life without these staples available. That could be Montgomery County in the next few years.

So is it really a good idea to hamstring the police more than it already is? Please stop Montgomery County's slow descent into agony.