

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO BILL 33-23
VOLUNTARY REGISTRY FOR 911 CALLS
SEPTEMBER 12, 2023 PUBLIC HEARING

Jeneva E. Stone
Montgomery County Parent



Dear Councilmembers,

My name is Jeneva Stone, and I am testifying as the parent of an adult dependent with multiple disabilities. Both my son and I are members of [People on the Go, a disability rights organization that has raised serious concerns about registry bills at the State level](#). I oppose Bill 33-23 for many reasons, because I believe the bill will not improve the lives of citizens with disabilities in Montgomery County, and may well harm them.

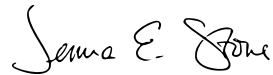
1. Bill 33-23 **does not contain any provisions or funding for training for first responders to learn how to work with people with disabilities**. Both my son Rob and I are graduates of the Arc of Maryland's Partners in Policymaking course, and, while we thought we had a good understanding of disability before taking the course, we discovered that there was still much we did not know. If the two of us, one of us disabled and the other a parent dealing with disability bias all of her child's life, still had things to learn, **how can the Montgomery County Police Dept and other first responders possibly know enough to help in emergency situations that involve people with disabilities?**
2. Bill 33-23 **does not include language that respects the rights and self-agency of people with disabilities**. Who would be allowed to add a person to the registry? As a parent of an adult dependent with disabilities, Rob's independence is of sufficient concern to my husband and myself that we decided NOT to seek legal guardianship for Rob. Rob is free to make his own decisions, with guidance. **Will the disabled individual have any rights with regard to this registry? Will their permission be sought? What evidence/documentation would be used to determine that the disabled person had agreed to put themselves on a public registry?** The County isn't acting in the best interests of people with disabilities unless they are respectful of their human and civil rights.
3. Finally, **what is the point of having a registry if first responders cannot be held responsible for any negative consequences that might occur in the case of a person who chose to be on the registry?** As a parent, that does not make me feel any safer about my child. First responders would know they were dealing with a disabled person, but would receive no training on this issue, and then wouldn't be held accountable for negative consequences?

4. Last session in the Maryland General Assembly, a bill on creating registries was introduced, but did not pass. **Why would our County Council attempt to create a registry without further guidance from the State?** This makes no sense.

I feel that the County Council is simply attempting to establish a registry without any safeguards, training, or other funding to make it at all helpful without actually consulting with the disability community, state officials or legislators, all for the purpose of appearing to take action on something that appears to be primarily supported by parents, not disabled persons themselves.

Please do not enact this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeneva E. Stone".

Jeneva E. Stone