

**Testimony: Bill 2-24**

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As a resident and constituent of Montgomery County for more than four decades, I had long thought that Montgomery County was a place where all were assured of equitable treatment. But more recently, I have found out different. Evidence points to inequitable treatment by race in regards to so-called consent searches, which are not actually voluntary. Such searches often pressure people into consenting in various ways.

The Office of Legislative Oversight reported, in October 25, 2022: Between 2018 and 2022, Black drivers accounted for 30 percent of traffic stops and 43 percent of searches, although Black people make up only 18 percent of the adult population in Montgomery County. These statistics raise questions about how equitably Black people are treated in Montgomery County, especially by police.

Further, consent searches are inefficient and a poor use of resources. For example, in Montgomery County less than 0.5 percent — one out of 205 traffic stops — results in recovery of a firearm.

Therefore, I urge the County Council to pass Bill 2-24, the Freedom to Leave Act. This bill would ban consent searches during traffic stops. Such legislation will bring greater racial equity to Montgomery County.