



Fraternal Order of Police
Montgomery County Lodge 35

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Honorable members of the County Council:

I am Lee Holland, a dedicated law enforcement officer and the current President of Montgomery County Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 35 (Lodge 35). Our lodge proudly represents over 1500 active and retired Montgomery County law enforcement officers, serving as the certified bargaining representative for the rank-and-file officers of the Montgomery County Police Department.

As highlighted by Governor Moore in his recent State of the State address, "We have heard that people want us to make Maryland safer. Public safety remains our administration's top priority". We agree that the imperative to enhance public safety stands as our community's highest responsibility and priority.

That said, Council Bill 2-24 stands in direct contradiction to Governor Moore's vision for a safer Maryland and runs counter to the expressed concerns of the majority of your constituents, who, like many Marylanders, perceive a decline in community safety. The alarming uptick in violent crimes, including homicides and carjackings involving firearms, underscores the urgency of addressing public safety concerns. Rather than engaging law enforcement in constructive dialogue to address these challenges, we find ourselves once again grappling with proposals that may curtail the ability of Montgomery County police officers to uphold safety in our communities.

The Fourth Amendment protects individuals from unreasonable searches and seizures by the government without a warrant, as long as there is a judicial finding of probable cause. That said, exceptions to these protections recognize certain unique circumstances, including Exigent Circumstances, Plain View, Stop and Frisk, and Voluntarily Consent. It is this last constitutional provision, Voluntary Consent or simply "consent searches" which serves as a crucial tool in advancing public safety, enabling law enforcement officers to detect and seize illegal firearms and narcotics circulating within our county. In instances in which these searches are performed, existing policy of the Montgomery County Police Department mandates that officers apprise individuals subject to consent searches of their right to refuse such searches. Moreover, all consent searches are meticulously documented through body-worn cameras and written records. Empirical evidence demonstrates no discernible racial disparities in the conduct of consent searches by Montgomery County police officers.

Regrettably, the passage of this bill, akin to previous policing legislation enacted by the County Council, threatens to further erode the morale of the officers of the Montgomery County Police Department. Indeed, such legislation has contributed significantly to the shortfall of over 175 officers in our county. Officers are weary of measures that seemingly cast aspersions on the integrity of the department, portraying dedicated law enforcement professionals as racially biased or untrustworthy. On behalf of the rank and file, I implore you to demonstrate solidarity with the officers of the Montgomery County Police Department by rejecting this bill and reconsidering prior enactments that have regrettably undermined community safety.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Lee Holland

President, Montgomery County Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 35