



February 15, 2024

## Letter to the Montgomery County Council

### Re: Bill 2-24, Freedom to Leave Act

Dear Council Members:

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, Maryland, (LWVMC) would like to express its **support for Bill 2-24, Freedom to Leave Act**. LWVMC advocates for **pro-active and preventive community policing and county enforcement that treats all residents fairly under the law**. We believe that county law enforcement is accountable to the public and in particular, that law enforcement officers and their agencies are responsible for treating individuals fairly under the law. Finally, the League supports constitutional policies and procedures that build public trust and encourage positive community relationships.

Bill 2-24 prioritizes the Fourth Amendment rights of Montgomery County citizens, which include the prohibition of unreasonable searches and seizures, and it requires that certain data and information related to traffic stops be collected and reported annually to the county. The bill has the potential to reduce disparities in traffic enforcement by prohibiting a police officer from requesting a consent search of a motor vehicle or person during a traffic stop.

There is an inherent power imbalance between police officers and civilians during traffic stops. This can lead drivers to feel pressure to agree to consent searches, despite their voluntary nature. In particular, Black and Brown drivers may feel compelled to give consent due to fear of retribution for not complying or based on past interactions with police. In Montgomery County Black and Brown drivers are [subjected to more traffic stops](#) than White and Asian drivers despite the fact that they comprise a smaller share of the population, according to the county's Office of Legislative Oversight. This bill will ensure that members of our community do not feel targeted by our police, which will help build greater trust in law enforcement.

Equitable treatment of all residents and accountable policing are crucial to maintaining public safety and a hospitable community. We thank you for providing the public with this opportunity to give input on this bill.

Susan Albertaine  
President