

Anita Lampel
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Testimony in Support of Special Appropriations - December 1, 2020

1. \$406,000 for Youth Development - After School Youth Support & Engagement Hubs
2. \$750,000 for Restorative Justice Training for MCEA School Staff
3. \$312,455 for Children, Youth, and Family Services - Therapeutic Recreation Services for School-Age Youth

Dear County Council President Katz and County Council Members,

My name is Anita Lampel. I am a resident of Montgomery County's District 1 and I am testifying in support of the special appropriations for Youth Development; Restorative Justice Training; and Therapeutic Recreation Services for Youth.

Councilmembers Jawando and Reimer understand that support services, such as After School Youth Support and Engagement, Therapeutic Recreation Services for Youth, and Restorative Justice programs, reduce the criminalization of teen-age mistakes and prioritize youth services that will move Montgomery County towards racial equity and equity for students with individualized education plans to meet special needs to the front of how Montgomery County serves its youth.

I have a Ph.D. from Stanford University in Psychology and served as the department head of the child-adolescent mental health program for a large county. In that capacity, and later in private practice, I sat on numerous boards involving juvenile justice, the interface between courts and support services, and how to properly assess and assist youth who were troubled. I went to juvenile halls and juvenile detention facilities, group homes, and psychiatric hospitals for youth.

The teens I saw were troubled, sometimes suicidal, frightened, frequently seriously behind in reading and math abilities, often differently abled, hyperactive, and in need of medical and dental help. The teens I saw could have used help—and not criminalization—much earlier in their lives.

The bills that are before you today will intervene in the school to prison pipeline and will work to keep students in school, without the stigma of a juvenile arrest. Results of a major study of SROs in schools show that graduation rates and college attendance decrease when SROs are involved in high schools¹. Results of studies on the impact of properly implemented Restorative Justice programs show remarkable positive findings in student retention, satisfaction, and graduation rates².

The right, equitable, thoughtful act is for you, now, to vote in favor of these bills before you, and to increase the scope of these programs moving forward using funds from a terminated and ineffective SRO program.

Thank you,

Anita Lampel

¹ Weisbart, Emily K. *Patrolling Public Schools: The Impact of Funding of School Police on Student Discipline and Long Term Educational Outcomes*. Luskin School of Public Affairs, Dept. of Public Policy, University of California at Los Angeles, October, 2018

² Fronius, Trevor, et al. *Restorative Justice in US Schools: A Research Review*. West Ed, February 2016