

Hello Councilmembers. My name is Isabella Majarowitz, and I am an 11th grader at Northwood High School in Silver Spring.

My message to you today is a demand that you remove SROs from all MCPS schools, and replace them with programs and services that will actually support students.

While I myself have never had an experience with SROs, the majority of students at my school are of color. And data within MCPS and nationally has shown that having police in schools makes students of color--particularly Black students--feel unsafe, and can have a negative impact on their mental health. It's my belief that every student should feel safe while in school, so why do we continue to fund a program that has left many students with lasting fear and trauma?

That's why replacing the SRO Program with services and practices that support students is necessary. I know so many students, including myself at times, that would have really benefited from the presence of therapists or psychologists in their schools. It has been proven over and over that implementing restorative justice principles, hiring more mental health counselors, and practicing anti-racism are effective at keeping schools safe, and supporting students' growth.

I simply don't understand how MCPS can stand for student safety, while continuing to support a program that makes students feel unsafe. So, I urge the county council to take decisive action to remove SROs from every MCPS school, and use the funding to provide essential support services for students.

No one should feel unsafe while in school.

Thank you.