Jews United for Justice (JUFJ)
Jerry Kickenson

JEWS UNITED
FOR JUSTICE

THINK JEWISHLY. ACT LOCALLY.

Bill 45-20 - SUPPORT
Community Policing - Data
December 8, 2020

My name is Jerry Kickenson, I live in District 4, and I am testifying in support of Bill 45-20 on behalf of Jews United for Justice, which advances economic, racial, and social justice in Montgomery County by educating and mobilizing our local Jewish community to action. I am an information technology professional with decades of experience, including detailed data analysis.

Our Torah teaches that it was "all the people" who accepted the Torah at Mount Sinai. So too, we believe that all the people in our County have the right to help shape our County's laws and policies. Yet how can community members and elected leaders hold police officers accountable for actions that are not recorded in MCPD data?

JUFJ appreciates the Council's decision to implement the recommendations of the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) regarding the collection of data on various policing practices, and we thank Councilmember Jawando for his leadership on this bill. We especially support the bill's specification that data collection should allow the Council and the public to track the racial and ethnic identity of those impacted by policing practices in our County.

As written, Bill 45-20 would dramatically improve MCPD data collection and reporting practices. Based on our experience analyzing data already published by MCPD, we recommend the Council and MCPD consider two enhancements to even further advance the ability of the Council and the public to detect and address disparities.

First, always include, where possible, the outcome of the interaction. While benchmark measures (for example, how often different races or ethnicities are stopped and possibly searched) can demonstrate disproportionate impact, they cannot on their own demonstrate bias, whether implicit or explicit. Adding outcome measures (for example, did the search actually result in contraband found) provides the additional data needed to detect bias. Our past analysis of traffic stop data released by MCPD showed a disproportionate number of stops of Black and Hispanic drivers, as pointed out in the OLO recommendation. The ability to also analyze search outcomes showed that although Black and Hispanic drivers are stopped and searched disproportionately, it was about as likely, or even less likely, to actually find contraband when searching them. This is strong evidence of bias, since the outcome (finding contraband) did not justify the action (stop and search).

Second, always include, where possible, the police district of the officer involved in the stop, incident or arrest. This would allow a drill-down to determine if countywide trends apply across MCPD, or are concentrated in certain police districts. For example, while our analysis of past traffic stop data showed

a disproportionate number of stops of Black and Hispanic drivers countywide, the magnitude was much greater in the 3rd district (Silver Spring) and somewhat greater in the 5th (Germantown) and 6th (Gaithersburg) districts. While it is technically possible to map geocoded location or address data to the police district, doing so complicates data analysis - it is much simpler to just supply the district as is already done for several MCPD data sets. This kind of data can be very useful to the Council, the public, and MCPD in finding the best way to address any issues found.

JUFJ also supports the amendments offered by our partners, including Silver Spring Justice Coalition and Takoma Park Mobilization, and we look forward to continuing the conversation about what should be included in this bill as you conduct worksessions. Thank you.