



Fraternal Order of Police
Montgomery County Lodge 35

Phone 301.948.4286
Fop35mail@Fop35.com

February 4, 2021

Tom Hucker, Council President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Ave.
Rockville, MD 20850

President Hucker,

FOP Lodge 35, which represents over 1400 active and retired Montgomery County Law Enforcement Officers, OPPOSES Bill 46-20 Police – School Resources Officers – Prohibited. According to statistics, in the 2018-2019 school calendar year, Montgomery County SROs averaged 2 physical arrests per SRO. That's approximately 5 students in all of Montgomery County arrested each month by SROs. Of the other 121 students physically arrested, an officer was called to the school to make the arrest. These statistics show that the SROs in Montgomery County Schools only arrest a student as a last resort.

Montgomery County started the SRO program to keep our children safe and to build a positive relationship between the police and students in Montgomery County. This has been demonstrated numerous times, to include 2018 when FOP member, SRO Troy Melott, was informed by a student that a classmate had brought a handgun to school. Melott was able to secure the handgun before any students were injured or killed. Also in 2017, FOP member, SRO PJ Gregory, recognized a suspicious car on the school grounds, which turned out to be stolen, and had a stolen police assault rifle in the trunk. Again, no students were injured in this case.

Lodge 35 agrees, SROs should not be involved in disciplinary matters between students and the school administration. That is not the role of the SRO. We believe, as with all policing strategies and programs, there is always room for improvement. Lodge 35 is recommending that the County Executive and Montgomery County School Board make the following amendments to our current SRO program:

- Transition SROs into a soft uniforms - polo shirt and khaki pants to align with school security.
- Create an "Introduction to Policing" course for high school students to be taught by SROs. This will help law enforcement and student relationships, as well as an initiative to recruit more Montgomery County residents.
- Reinstitute the D.A.R.E program.
- Provide additional Counselors to assist the SROs to further reduce arrests. Consider a pilot program for police officers who have advanced academic degrees in social work or counseling.

Any change to the SRO program should be established by the County Executive and Montgomery County Public Schools. This is their role, not the County Council's.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lee G. Holland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lee" and last name "Holland" clearly distinguishable.

Lee G. Holland
Corporate Vice President
FOP Lodge 35