

Fran Zamore
Chevy Chase, MD

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO BILL 7-21
Building Positive Relationships with Law Enforcement Within Schools
March 4, 2021

Dear Montgomery County Councilmembers,

My name is Fran Zamore and I live in Montgomery County District I. I am writing in opposition to Bill 7-21, which would continue the SRO program in our schools.

The Jewish concept of *b'tzelem Elohim* refers to the notion that all people are created in the Divine image. To me this means that we each have a spark of divinity in us. Knowing this, believing it in my bones, compels me to honor the diversity in our communities and do what I can to see that all people, **and all students**, are treated with equity.

I was therefore so impressed with the County Council's passage of the Racial Equity and Social Justice Legislation. I participated in community meetings as you were gathering information and feedback from Montgomery County residents in 2019, and I hosted a house party to help inform and engage my neighbors in the process.

When the legislation passed I was so excited at the prospect that every piece of new legislation would be looked at through a racial equity lens. And now the proof is in the pudding.

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) has provided the Council with a detailed, comprehensive Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statement regarding the impact of the SRO legislation on racial inequity in the county. The OLO Impact Statement is clearly summarized by them stating: "By maintaining the School Resource Officer Program, the Office of Legislative Oversight anticipates that Bill 7-21 will **not** advance racial equity and social justice in the County because it does not prioritize diminishing disparities in student arrests or suspensions by race, income, or disability status."

I'm proud to be an active member of the MORE Network and a co-team leader of JUF's Racial Equity and Policing Team. I'm so excited that the Office of Legislative Oversight has been given

resources to do their job. And they are doing it! Now, I expect you, my Councilmembers, to read, digest, and incorporate OLO's findings into your work.

In order to build community trust for the racial equity impact statement process, the Council must follow the findings of this important document. I urge you to oppose Bill 7-21, follow the data shared by the Office of Legislative Oversight, and follow the lead of the Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statement.

Respectfully,

Fran Zamore