



**The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
Montgomery County Branch
Testimony - Bill 18-21, Police – Internal Affairs Procedures and Reporting
Requirements
Tuesday, June 22, 2021**

Good afternoon Council President Hucker and Council Members. Thank you for holding this hearing to receive comments on Council Bill 18-21 – Police Internal Affairs Procedures and Reporting Requirements.

The NAACP Montgomery County Branch supports the overall aim and direction of this bill. Further, we appreciate Council President Hucker's willingness to work with us as this bill moved from idea to written product.

Over the last year, since the death of George Floyd, we have seen the important role of video recording in general and body-worn cameras in particular in providing evidence in cases involving police use of excessive force. The effective and consistent use of body-worn cameras by police officers must be an integral part of 21st century policing and may provide the kind of transparency that leads to accountability.

However, body-worn cameras are of little value in discerning the contours of police interaction with residents if the footage recorded is not routinely and randomly reviewed. Council Bill 18-21 is a commendable bill as it seeks to improve police accountability through the random review of body-worn cameras, and through the prompt reporting of serious Internal Affairs Division (IAD) investigations.

However, The NAACP Montgomery County Branch, has some concerns with the "random" review of body cam video. We are concerned that the essential component of "random review" may be undermined by the "with cause" provision. While we are sympathetic to the FOP's concern that the review of body cam videos should not be used by management to target or harass officers, we believe that the product of the reviews which reveal a failure to comply with established policy should be used to instruct, re-train and potentially discipline if a review reveals egregious conduct. Because a 'with cause standard' undermines the "random review" required in the bill we urge you to clarify the language in the bill to assure that the randomness element is not lost. Further, we recommend that the department be required to submit a plan for "random review" which involves use of an algorithm which assures a truly "random review."

The NAACP continues to be on the forefront of diminishing and promoting the de-escalation of police use of force. We believe that CB18-21 is an important step in moving towards more accountable and transparent police practices in Montgomery County.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and we look forward to continuing to work with you on legislation that brings equity and inclusion to every aspect of county government.