

**Testimony - Opposed Unless Amended - Montgomery County Expedited Bill 49-21  
Police - Police Accountability Board – Administrative Charging Committee – Established**

January 14, 2022

**To:** Montgomery County Council and County Executive

**From:** Rebecca Baier, Gaithersburg, MD

My name is Rebecca Baier, and I am a 39-year-old resident of Gaithersburg and District 3. This testimony is in opposition to MC Bill 49-21, Enabling Legislation for Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee.

As a resident of the state of Maryland, I advocated for The Maryland Police Accountability Act (HB 670, MPAA), which was enacted in the 2021 Legislative Session. This legislation requires each county to establish a Police Accountability Board (PAB), among other measures. An important goal of the MPAA is to give communities a critical role in oversight of police misconduct. This community oversight is in stark contrast to the previous processes that have unfortunately been highly favorable to police who have abused their power.

In 2021 alone, six people have been killed by unnecessary police violence in our county. This is heart-wrenching. My values and faith tradition affirm that these lives have inherent value: Montgomery County is a worse place to live because these people were killed by the police. I expect you, as our elected officials, to support community involvement in police accountability that those who choose to abuse their power and authority will be held accountable for the pain and loss they cause. The expectation is that police accountability, in combination with training and effective leadership, will lead to a cultural shift that decreases the incidence of police violence in our communities.

What I see in the bill, as confirmed by the [OLO's Racial Equity and Social Justice analysis](#), is that the PAB membership requirements will make it extremely difficult for people outside of law enforcement to serve on the PAB. By requiring certain experience, many of our community members are unnecessarily excluded from participating and contributing their voice. This criteria perpetuates the status quo for police discipline in Montgomery County, and this is in stark contrast with the intent of the new statewide MPAA. As the RESJ Impact Statement states, **“the police accountability system [Bill 49-21] proposes neither aligns with best practices nor meaningfully provides civilian oversight for the County’s system of police discipline.”**

Furthermore, the lack of financial compensation for most PAB members means that even if the membership requirements were to be changed, many impacted community members could still be de facto excluded from the process.

Also, I understand that MC Bill 49-21 requires the County Attorney to serve as PAB counsel, when the County Attorney also represents the MCPD and the County. This creates unnecessary

and unacceptable conflicts of interest. The PAB must have its own, independent counsel and staff in order to engage in the responsibilities delegated to it by the MPAA.

In closing, I think the bill will be ineffective at improving policing and police accountability, and that ultimately the outcome will perpetuate unsafe neighborhoods in our county. I respectfully request you to take into account the significant feedback from myself, other community members, and the County's own Office of Legislative Oversight, and oppose MC Bill 49-21 unless it is significantly amended.

Thank you,

Rebecca