

**National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
Montgomery County Branch
Testimony on Expedited Bill 49-21, Police Accountability Board - Administrative Charging
Committee
January 18, 2022**

Good evening, Council President Alborno and Members of the County Council. Thank you for holding this hearing to receive comments on Council Bill 49-21, Police Accountability Board—Administrative Charging Committee.

My name is Faith Blackburne. I am here on behalf of the Montgomery County Maryland Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). I am chair of the Political Action Committee for the branch.

In January 2000, as the result of a complaint brought by the Montgomery County Branch of the NAACP which alleged racial profiling in traffic stops, the Montgomery County Police Department entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice. The MCPD promised to collect data and take concrete steps to stop disproportionate and seemingly discriminatory traffic enforcement by the Police Department against African Americans. While much has changed in this county in twenty years, much remains the same. African Americans are still more likely than any other group to be stopped by the police for alleged traffic violations. According to the Office of Legislative Oversight, while Black people represent 18% of Montgomery County’s population, they account for 32% of traffic stops.

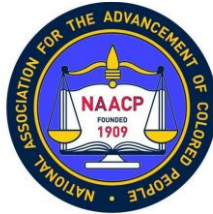
In short, disparate treatment by the police is still a daily reality for Montgomery County’s Black residents. Council Bill 49-21, which is intended to implement a state law requiring the enactment of Police Accountability Boards throughout Maryland should be used as a means to address discriminatory police practices by bringing transparency and accountability to the Civilian Complaint process. Unfortunately, this bill in its current form will not accomplish that goal.

As the Office of Legislative Oversight found in its Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statement, in its current form this bill:

“offers few changes to the County’s existing police accountability process that would meaningfully change the current disciplinary process of police or improve accountability for misconduct.”

Therefore, the NAACP urges this Council to amend this bill to include:

1) An increase in the size of its membership and a change in its eligibility requirements to ensure the Black and Brown residents who are disproportionately impacted by policing and misconduct are represented;



- 2) An expansion of the PAB's scope to review all allegations of police misconduct made by the public;
- 3) A requirement that MCPD provide the PAB access to all relevant data;
- 4) A requirement that MCPD assign a designated point person to address all PAB data requests, and
- 5) Specific language defining the staffing and annual budget to support the work of the PAB and ACC.

Without these important amendments nothing will change. We have already witnessed the lack of change in the last 20 years. We cannot wait another 20 years for justice in this progressive County.

In closing, let me note that yesterday, we marked the Federal Holiday commemorating the birth of Martin Luther King. And while many people use this occasion to discuss his 1963 "I have a dream" speech, few remember that his speech also included these words:

"There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, when will you be satisfied? We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. "

So here we are, almost 60 years later, still seeking an end to brutality and disparate treatment. We seek nothing more than transparency, accountability, and justice for our residents in their interactions with the police. And we will not be satisfied until those goals are accomplished.

Thank you.