

Jeff Reiser
Silver Spring, MD

Testimony Against Unless Amended - Bill 49-21 (Enabling Legislation for Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee)

My name is Jeff Reiser. I live in Silver Spring in District 5 with my wife and two children. I am submitting testimony against Bill 49-21 unless it is significantly amended to provide real police accountability.

One afternoon in 2021, I was stopped by an MCPD patrol officer for driving with an expired registration tag. At one point during the stop, while the officer addressed me about the reason he pulled me over, without thinking, I reached into the console between the two front seats to try to locate the registration tag I had placed there earlier in the week. The officer firmly and calmly directed me to keep my hands within clear sight. Suddenly realizing what I had just done, I immediately placed my hands on my steering wheel. Soon, the stop was over, I drove home, and applied the tag upon getting out of my car.

During the stop, the officer treated me with professionalism and respect. While I am not suggesting that he doesn't treat everyone in the same manner, from the moment he drew my attention to the location of my hands, I could not help but think about Black motorists who have been killed by police officers for doing the same thing. The alarming trends of racially disparate policing are present not only nationally, but in Montgomery County, too.

In 2021, six Montgomery County residents were killed by police in situations that did not merit the use of lethal force. Five of these six people killed by police were young Black men, a tragic demonstration of our County's racially disparate use of police force against Black members of our community. To make matters worse, the lack of accountability that followed clearly demonstrates the need for the type of community oversight that MC Bill 49-21 fails to provide.

The whole purpose of the Police Disciplinary Boards, per the state legislation that mandated their creation, is to provide community oversight of policing. Yet Bill 49-21 was drafted without community input and creates criteria for membership on the PAB that essentially requires experience as a police officer or as an attorney. This severely limits opportunities for individuals most directly impacted by police misconduct to participate on the PAB.

As a White man living in a relatively affluent area of our County, I am not among the Montgomery County residents most directly impacted by incidents of police misconduct. I am not seeking a seat on the PAB for myself, or for other white people who have lived experiences similar to my own. But I ask that, as the leaders of our county, you act to ensure that the Black and Brown Montgomery County residents who are experiencing the brunt of police misconduct have the opportunity to join the PAB if they so choose. All residents of Montgomery County deserve a voice in determining what policing looks like in our communities. And unless you significantly amend Bill 49-21, this bill will, as the [Office of Legislative Oversight](#) eloquently stated, “*sustain racial and social inequities as the police accountability system it proposes neither aligns with best practices nor meaningfully provides civilian oversight for the County’s system of police discipline.*”

I ask that the Council amend MC Bill 49-21 per the recommendations of the Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statement to make this legislation one that Montgomery County residents deserve. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jeff Reiser