

Ms. Melody Cooper  
Gaithersburg, Maryland

**Opposed Unless Amended**  
**Bill 49-21: Enabling Legislation for Police Accountability Board and**  
**Administrative Charging Committee**

Good evening, Council President Albornoz and Council members.

My name is Melody Cooper. My son, Kwamena Ocran, attended Gaithersburg High School and two of my other sons attended Seneca Valley High school.

I oppose bill MC 49-21 unless it is significantly amended.

Last January 8, four Gaithersburg police officers, murdered my son, Kwamena. They were not indicted for this crime. The cops were not wearing body-worn cameras and had been stalking my son throughout the day according to witnesses. They approached him in the dark, were not in uniform, and witnesses reported that they did not announce who they were. He appeared afraid of the several men coming upon him, and he ran away. Later, the state's attorney reported they found no bullet casings from my son's alleged gun, and over 20 casings from the officers, even though the officers had claimed that my son shot at them.

To this day, I have **not** received the police report or any of the testimony that occurred at the grand jury. I still have not received the medical examiner's report that was completed. This is wrong.

Later, I learned that some of the police who killed my son had been involved in prior abuse. I received 86 pages of misconduct reports on these officers. I had to ask myself if they had been disciplined appropriately by a community board, could they have been fired? And if they could have been fired, or even corrected appropriately, maybe my son would still be alive.

It's unconscionable not to do all in our power to provide true community oversight over the police. This is a demand that is a long time coming and Black people have been asking for generations. Montgomery County ought to provide more community involvement to oversee the police, because as we have seen, the current discipline system has failed tragically.

In addition to the murder of my son, now I have met some of the many other mothers and family who are grieving in Montgomery County. We demand that this bill not pass in its current form and be significantly amended.