

Anita Lampel
Bethesda, MD

Montgomery County Council Public Hearing - FY23 Operating Budget
Position: Favorable with Amendments

My name is Anita Lampel and I live in District 1. I am submitting testimony in opposition to the creation of the Police Department's Community Resource Bureau and the corresponding \$5.5 million increase to MCPD's budget for FY 22-23.

The Community Resource Bureau is overreach by MCPD. Funds should be distributed to other departments which know how to provide services that are needed within the schools, such as social workers, and within the community, such as Parks and Recreation.

As the County Council is fully aware, serious objections have been raised and continue to be raised about the Community Engagement Officer 2.0 model which places police AGAIN within public schools. Police don't prevent violence within schools and the presence of police is actually statistically associated with an increase in gun violence in schools. Studies also show that whatever group is the "minority" within a school district is the group most targeted by police – Black students, Latinx students, Indigenous students, and students with disabilities are always the target. What we have seen is how MCPS and the government agencies responsible for support, such as social workers, failed to put the services in place that would have eased the transition of students back to schools after COVID. Anxious, distressed students came back to NOTHING. And now the police want to push themselves back into everything.

That brings me to my objection to the use of taxpayer dollars for the police to do summer camps, basketball, and other events within the Community Resources Bureau. We are trying to get police out of doing what other agencies can and should do! Let Parks and Recreation do those events. The MCPD says they don't have enough officers now, so let the officers they do have to handle serious crime – not basketball teams!

The county also needs robust, complete Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams to respond to our residents in mental health crises. MCPD is not equipped to handle those problems and should not handle those problems unless a clear and present danger to other citizens exists. As the Council knows, jurisdictions with full Mobile Crisis Outreach Team coverage have dramatically decreased trauma and death to the vulnerable individuals who are served.

Based on the number and complexity of calls, I support the ask of the Silver Springs Justice Coalition for three times as many MCOT positions to be allocated to the budget: a total of **169.2 full-time-equivalents and total salaries plus benefits of \$12.2 million**. This level of services will provide for 3 teams for each of the six districts (18 teams in total) to respond at any given time: providing real 24/7 coverage for the whole County.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns which I know are supported by many others.