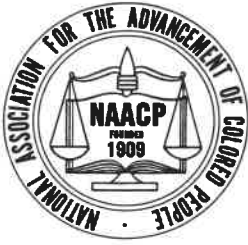


**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND BRANCH**



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June 13, 2023

27-23
NAACP Statement in Opposition to Bill ~~23-24~~, Repeal of the Police Advisory Commission

The Montgomery County Branch of the NAACP adamantly opposes this effort to repeal The Police Advisory Committee (PAC).

Repealing this bill would indicate that this county no longer believes that the ordinary resident should have the ability to voice concerns about law enforcement policies and practices.

The NAACP joined with several other community organizations to work with Council Members Reimer and Jawando to create a commission that would provide residents with a voice to express concerns about law enforcement policies and practices. The PAC was created to advise the County Council. For the NAACP, this Committee is the culmination of a long and arduous effort to provide civilian voices a role in law enforcement practices.

After several months of meetings, the legislation creating this commission was introduced, passed by the County Council, and signed into law. This Council took those actions long before the national dialogue hit a fever pitch with the killing of George Floyd. This Council acted because it understood that the community—especially racial minorities and other marginalized people who often feel targeted by law enforcement—should have a place to present their concerns without fear. That need has not disappeared.

The state of Maryland also understood the need for reform and enacted SB670, the bill that created the Police Accountability Board. We understand that there are some people who believe that the PAC and the PAB are duplicative. However, there are several major distinctions between the two entities. Those distinctions matter.

The PAB and ACC are empowered to hear, act upon and review disciplinary matters that involve law enforcement officers. No one would doubt the importance and significance of that work in reforming law enforcement practices. This examination of individual cases is important and will provide insight.

The PAC reviews policies and practices to determine whether systemic problems adversely affect residents and indicate a need for reform. For instance, the PAC's report on traffic enforcement, along with the work of the Office of Legislative Oversight, clearly expressed traffic enforcement practices which disproportionately impacted Black and Brown males. These disparate results plainly set forth the need for reform of traffic enforcement policies and practices.

We should not have to wait for the PAB and ACC to hear a case involving a traffic stop that resulted in a civilian complaint to provide a basis for additional examination which may lead to additional analysis about certain practices. Eliminating the PAC will assure that the reform of law enforcement practices will come to rely on individual cases. And while the PAB may be able to carry out this kind of additional

examination and analysis, such actions may slow their review of disciplinary matters. From a public safety perspective, any effort to impede review and reach finality in disciplinary matters does not bode well for the officers accused or the general public.

Moreover, it should be noted that the PAC provides the kind of community involvement that few other Boards and Commissions offer. The PAC not only provides an appointee from each Councilmember and the County Executive, but the appointees must also include representatives from high school students and young adults. Further, the Police Chief or his designee and a Representative from the Police union are also ex-officio members of the PAC. This kind of representation from a broad spectrum of people is one of the unique factors which makes the PAC an important part of this county's continuing discussion on law enforcement practices and policies and allows for the representation of diversity in race, gender, geographic location, and socio-economic status.

Finally, some people have indicated that there is confusion about the role of the PAC and the role of the PAB. Not only would a review of each website resolve any confusion, but it must be noted that this county has more than a few Boards and Commissions which address similar issues by different methods. For instance, this county has a long history of controversy over the policy and practices involving the sale of alcohol. To address those concerns, the County has two boards that address alcohol policy. One board, the Alcoholic Beverages Advisory Board, addresses broad questions of alcohol policy. Another board, the Board of License Commissioners, addresses regulatory and disciplinary issues involving establishments that sell alcohol. Having these two entities allows the county to not only address those establishments that have violated the rules but also provides a forum for broader discussions on what the rules should be. If we can have this kind of comprehensive approach with alcohol, we should be able to have the same kind of format to discuss law enforcement.

Based on all of the aforementioned reasons, the NAACP seeks your opposition to this bill to repeal the PAC.

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