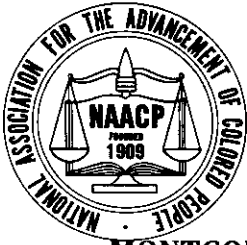


**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND BRANCH**



P.O. BOX 2165
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20847-2165

MONTGOMERY COUNTY NAACP STRONGLY OPPOSES COUNCIL BILL 32-23

Testimony

Tuesday, September 12, 2023

Good afternoon, Council President Glass and Members of the County Council.

Montgomery County NAACP Branch encourages the County Council to adopt several amendments to the original legislation which created the Policing Advisory Commission (PAC). First, we support the amendment which would change the name of the board. We believe a suitable name would be the Advisory Commission on Policing and urge you to adopt such a name. Second, we support an amendment that would increase membership of the PAC allowing each member of the Council to appoint one person to serve on the board. Third, we suggest an amendment that would prohibit family members of currently serving MCPD officers from serving on the board.

Unfortunately, there is nothing else in this bill we can support. This bill fundamentally changes the PAC and undermines community involvement in policing accountability. Additionally, this bill would undermine the NAACP's efforts to encourage constructive civic engagement that ensures fair treatment for all people in Montgomery County. This county needs a forum for residents to express their concerns about policies, programs, and practices of the police. The PAC must be able to hear those concerns, seek information, and make recommendations on the matters raised by residents. Eliminating an oversight role would require the board to do nothing more than collect concerns which would undermine public confidence in the PAC and in the Council's commitment to meaningful law enforcement reform.

We agree that the PAC membership should be expanded to permit every council member to nominate one person to serve on the PAC. The nomination of each councilmember should be respected as a reflection of the needs and interests of their respective districts or constituencies.

We oppose efforts to limit those considered for nomination by councilmembers by requiring seats for representatives of the business community, homeowners' associations or civic associations. The purpose of this board is to provide an avenue for residents of the county to express their concerns about the policies and practices of the MCPD. Also, the law permits the county council to seek input regarding specific legislation. Given these county-specific functions, membership must be limited to county residents. Because there is no language in the bill that would require business owners or others representing trade groups or associations to be residents of the county, we oppose a change in membership that would allow non-county residents to sit on this board.

We oppose the elimination of the seats designated for high school students and young adults. These groups should be included because their perspective on policing is likely to provide valuable insights on policymaking. Moreover, as the county seeks to expand inclusion of the perspectives of marginalized groups in its legislative efforts, the effort to exclude young people from this body flies in the face of those efforts.

We oppose allowing police officers or their representatives to serve as voting members of this body. Representatives of the police and the FOP currently serve as advisory members of the body. Their role is to provide information and insight to the voting members. Allowing them a vote would present a clear conflict of interest for them. Additionally, it would undermine the role of the body as one that represents the interests of the community. Finally, as an agency in county government, the MCPD has a voice in all policy making affecting the agency. As a recognized collective bargaining entity, the FOP has a voice in policy affecting its officers.

We oppose efforts to eliminate the oversight role of the board. The purpose of the board is to provide a forum for community residents to express their concerns about policies, programs, and practices of the police. The board must be able to hear those concerns, seek information, and make recommendations on the matters raised by residents. Eliminating an oversight role would require the board to do nothing more than collect concerns.

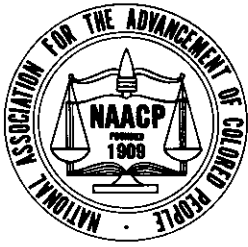
We oppose efforts to specify term limits. Currently, county policy provides a suggested term limit for all boards and commissions. However, because these volunteer positions are often difficult to fill, it is imprudent to limit the service of interested, qualified and experienced people.

In closing, the Montgomery County NAACP opposes these proposed amendments because we remain committed to ensuring that county residents and particularly residents who represent traditionally under-represented and marginalized communities not only have a forum to express their concerns but have access to a board that can effectively address the issues raised.

Thank you.

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Good afternoon, Council President Glass, and Members of the County Council.

My name is Pat Fenn. I am the Communications Chair of the Montgomery County NAACP. I encourage you to read the written testimony submitted by the NAACP. Today, I will provide an abbreviated version.

The Montgomery County NAACP Branch encourages the County Council to adopt several amendments to the original legislation which created the Policing Advisory Commission (PAC). First, we support the amendment which would change the name of the board. We believe a suitable name would be the Advisory Commission on Policing and urge you to adopt such a name. Second, we support an amendment that would increase membership of the PAC allowing each member of the Council to appoint one person to serve on the board. Third, we suggest an amendment that would prohibit family members of currently serving MCPD officers from serving on the board.

Unfortunately, there is nothing else in this bill we can support. This bill fundamentally changes the PAC and undermines community involvement in policing accountability. It undermines the NAACP's efforts to encourage constructive civic engagement that ensures fair treatment for all people in Montgomery County. This county needs a forum for residents to express their concerns about policies, programs, and practices of the police. The PAC must be able to hear those concerns, seek information, and make recommendations on the matters raised by residents. Eliminating an oversight role would require the board to do nothing more than collect concerns which would undermine public confidence in the PAC and in the Council's commitment to meaningful law enforcement reform.

We oppose the elimination of the seats designated for high school students and young adults. These groups must be included because their perspective on policing is likely to provide valuable insights on policymaking. As the county seeks to expand inclusion of the perspectives of marginalized groups in its legislative efforts, the effort to exclude young people from this body flies in the face of those efforts.

We oppose allowing police officers or their representatives to serve as voting members of this body. Representatives of the police and the FOP currently serve as advisory members of the body. As an agency of county government and a collective bargaining unit, they have ample opportunity to voice their concerns about policies.

We oppose efforts to eliminate the oversight role of the board. The board must be able to hear the concerns of residents, seek information, and make recommendations on the matters

raised by residents. Eliminating an oversight role would require the board to do nothing more than collect concerns.

In closing, the Montgomery County NAACP opposes these proposed amendments because we remain committed to ensuring that county residents and particularly residents who represent traditionally under-represented and marginalized communities not only have a forum to express their concerns but have access to a board that can effectively address the issues raised.

Thank you.