

## Montgomery

## County Council

##### *From the Office of Councilmember Hans Riemer* *Dec. 3, 2019*

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**Montgomery County Council adopts landmark legislation to create Policing Advisory Commission**

*Councilmember Riemer’s bill will create a new body to bring police and communities together and improve police policies and procedures*

ROCKVILLE, Md., December 3, 2019—The Montgomery County Council today unanimously adopted Bill 14-19, introduced by Councilmember Hans Riemer, creating a Policing Advisory Commission. Councilmembers Will Jawando, Tom Hucker and Evan Glass were cosponsors of Bill 14-19.

The goal of the Commission is to improve Council oversight of the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) and strengthen community trust in police. The Commission will advise the Council on policing matters, provide information regarding best practices, and recommend policies and programs.

“We have an excellent police department staffed by conscientious public servants,” Riemer said. “But we are not immune to the challenges that communities are facing all over the country. Montgomery County can be part of the solution by embracing a new approach that centers police work in community participation and community values.”

A policing policy commission is different from a public oversight commission or public review board that some communities have established. This County’s new commission will not investigate or prosecute complaints against officers. Those matters are retained under departmental procedures, and Montgomery County lacks the authority to create an effective public review board under current state law.

Rather, the Commission is intended to review the policy guidelines that shape how the department and officers do their work. For example: How do we train officers for encounters with residents who have mental health challenges? How do we treat marijuana use or possession in enforcement? How effective is our disciplinary process?

“Policy issues profoundly impact how communities experience police work. That is why it is necessary to have community input into the policy making process. Bringing all voices to one table will help everyone move forward together. Even where there is disagreement, hopefully there will be more understanding,” stated Councilmember Riemer.

The Policing Advisory Commission will deliberate on policy issues, using data and focusing on best practices. The goal is to strengthen the Council’s oversight role and help prevent problems from occurring. The Commission will consist of 13 public members who will reflect the diversity of the County's communities and have an interest or expertise in policing matters. Nine members would be appointed by the Council and four members would be appointed by the County Executive. Two would be youth members, one appointment must be under the age of 25 and one between the ages of 26 and 35. The police chief or a designee and the president of the Fraternal Order of Police, or a designee will serve as ex-officio members.

The legislation was championed by organizations such as the NAACP, Identity, CASA, Jews United for Justice, and ACLU of Maryland as well as the Washington Post editorial board.

More information on Bill 14-19 can be found in the [Council staff report](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2019/20191203/20191203_6A.pdf).

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