

March 1, 2021

My name is Syree Waldon. I am a student in the Harford County Public School system. I am here today to testify that we need our School Resource Officers.

Keep our SRO's. I am disappointed that there is legislation to remove SRO's or hinder what they do in our schools. These bills appear to be introduced by legislators from a few counties where very serious delinquent acts are occurring. This is sad that you are trying to cut SROs for 23 counties, instead of focusing in on the issues and making modifications or requiring more training or mandating some sort of matrix for arrest or referral of juveniles to Juvenile Services.

Keep our SRO's. There is no doubt we could use more counselors in our schools; however, not at the expense of safety and order. The response time for an officer who is called to the school will largely increase. You will get an officer that is not trained to work with juveniles. This will likely turn out poorly for all involved.

Keep our SRO's. SRO's, if properly trained, are a great resource to our school community, not just students, our parents. I know I can trust my SRO and I respect him. He trusts me and respects me. SRO's work hard to bridge the gap. Aside from being a good role model, SROs are mentors, educators, and really do make a difference just being themselves.

Keep our SRO's. I would like to suggest to Senate and House of Representatives members, you do not permit this legislation to succeed. SRO's have come a long way since their inception, and while not perfect, none of us are, the current training can be expanded to meet the needs of the community. Reach out to the trainers, offer recommendations. Enact laws that provide resources to the police as a whole and school administrators to get juveniles assistance or programs when they have committed a delinquent act v. arrest.

In closing, my middle school's motto is to SOAR, Seek excellence, Overcome obstacles, Accept responsibility, and Respect self and others. We, even as juveniles, need to accept responsibility and it starts with respecting self and others. Do not divide our communities. Keep our SROs.

Sincerely,

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