

HB 496
Primary and Secondary Education – Mental Health Services – Expansion
(Counselors Not Cops Act)
Ways and Means Committee
February 3, 2021

TESTIMONY OF LAUREN HURLEY

POSITION: SUPPORT

I am a high school English and English Language Learner teacher in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). I support HB 496, which shifts state funding away from school police and towards student mental health services, wraparound supports, and restorative approaches.

The experiences of my students remind me each day of why police do not belong in our schools. Many of those students are uncomfortable expressing their opinions or telling their stories on this subject because they fear retaliation at the hands of the police who have hurt them. Two of them, however, have asked that I share their perspectives – in their own words – in an effort to help enact the reforms at the heart of this bill:

J.S. – Current MCPS High School Student

“I have been pulled over by police because of the way I look [Hispanic] 6 times this year. They let two vans of K-9 dogs on me with ten cars because I was driving at night. I didn’t do nothing wrong but be brown. Police pulled a gun on me when I was 15. I was fishing and it got cold. I put my hands in my pockets waiting for a taxi. I turn around and some cop has a gun pointed at me. He thought I had a gun. I was just cold. So no they don’t make me safe. They make me feel the opposite. Then I gotta see them in my school the next day. How you think that makes me feel? I want to stay away.”

A.N. – Current MCPS High School Student

“I stay away. You know what I’m saying, Miss! I’m black, I’m Dominican, I’m like 7 feet tall with the orange hair. I know they see me. I got to protect myself. They don’t make any people like me feel safe.”

Please consider the experiences of students, and of other students who are most harmed by school police but least able to speak up, and vote in favor of HB 496.

For questions, please contact me at lauren.anne.snyder@gmail.com.