

March 8, 2022

Anita Lampel  
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### **TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB0613**

#### **Public Schools—Appropriations for School Safety Expenditures-Increase**

**TO:** Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang, and Appropriations Committee Members

**FROM:** Anita Lampel

My name is Anita Lampel. I live in Bethesda, in District 16. This testimony is in opposition to HB0163, Public Schools-Appropriations for School Safety Expenditures-Increase.

I am a psychologist with a Ph.D. from Stanford University. In California, I served on state and county commissions often dealing with youth in the juvenile justice system, on advisory panels to my school board, and I was a court expert witness.

When I moved to Montgomery County, home to one of the finest school systems in the country, I was told it was a progressive bastion. I was happy—until I learned it was not so progressive--until I learned that Maryland has the highest percentage of young Black men, ages 18 to 25, in prison of any other state--until I learned that Maryland has one of the worst records for juvenile justice in the country. School Resource Officers (SROs) contribute to these gross inequities.

- Your very own Maryland State Legislature’s Blue-Ribbon Panel on The School to Prison Pipeline noted, in its December 2018 report, that: “School Resource Officers told us that they viewed increased arrests in schools as a positive result of their work.”<sup>1</sup>
- Montgomery County’s Office of Legislative Oversight created two Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statements on SROs that stated unequivocally: “A review of the research suggests that school-police partnerships, even those aligned with best practices, lead to higher arrest rates and may not offer the best investment for improving students’ learning environments.”<sup>2</sup>
- Major studies show negative outcomes for a range of student success measures when SROs are on campus, especially impacting Black students, Latinx students, Native

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<sup>1</sup> “Maryland Commission on the School-to-Prison Pipeline and Restorative Practices,” <https://www.law.umaryland.edu/media/SOL/pdfs/Programs/ADR/STPP%20%20RP%20Commission%20Final%20Report.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> “Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement Bill 46-20,” <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/resjis/2020/RESJ-Bill46-20.pdf>.

students, and students who have Individual Education Plans. One of the outcomes--graduation rates and college attendance drop.<sup>3</sup>

- Research shows that the presence of armed officers in schools more than doubles the injury and fatality rate when a tragic school shooting occurs.<sup>4</sup>
- Alternative approaches like those lifted up in this bill -- counseling, trauma informed interventions, crisis teams, restorative justice -- have a long lasting positive impact on all students, on the entire school community, not just those in trouble. Toronto, Canada has rid itself of SROs to enhance equity, they added support services, and students are thriving.

You are responsible for the long-term best interests of all students. They are residents of Maryland, and your constituents. This bill fails in all respects to assist students, increases inequities, and drains needed resources from social supports that would help these children.

I respectfully urge you to reject HB 0163 and all its underlying concepts.

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<sup>3</sup> "Patrolling Public Schools: The Impact of Funding for School Police on Student Discipline and Long-term Education Outcomes" Emily Weisburst, <https://strategiesforyouth.org/sitefiles/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/PatrollingPublicSchools.pdf> and also see for additional references "Classroom Cops: Do Police Officers in Schools Help or Hinder Teachers?" Economist July 18, 2020 <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2020/07/18/do-police-officers-in-schools-help-or-hinder-teachers>

<sup>4</sup> "Presence of armed school officials and fatal and nonfatal gunshot injuries during mass shootings, United States, 1980-2019." JAMA Network February 16, 2021 <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2776515>