

February 10, 2022

Heidi Rhodes
Colesville, Maryland 20904



TESTIMONY ON HB231 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Montgomery County - Automated Traffic Enforcement - Implementing Agency MC 18-22

TO: Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee
FROM: Heidi Rhodes, on behalf of Jews United for Justice (JUFJ)

My name is Heidi Rhodes. I am a resident of Maryland District 14 and Montgomery County District 5. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Jews United for Justice in support of HB231, Montgomery County - Automated Traffic Enforcement - Implementing Agency MC 18-22. Jews United for Justice organizes 6,000 Jews and allies from across Maryland in support of local and state social, racial, and economic justice campaigns.

Jewish tradition teaches us in the book of Psalms “blessed are they who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times.” When we hear story after story of people being negatively impacted by their interactions with police, we know there is a lot of work to build that more just future. We must do everything possible to reduce interactions between police and community members that can result in harm, and not be reliant on police to do things that don't require police. We also should be moving funding from disproportionately large police department budgets to other departments that are in need of funding. To that end, we support changing how traffic violations are enforced in Montgomery County.

HB23 offers the very beginning of another vision of safety, one in which armed law enforcement officers are not responsible for ensuring safe roads for all drivers, pedestrians, and bikers. By enabling Montgomery County to choose to move automated traffic enforcement from the police department to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), this bill is a small but important first step to creating a safer and more efficient system for everyone.

This transfer of responsibility is a reasonable, common-sense measure that other jurisdictions — including DC — have initiated.¹ HB231 will begin the process of engaging other government agencies in taking on responsibilities currently held by police that don't need to be done by police.

On behalf of Jews United for Justice, I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB231.

¹ **Jurisdictions: Berkeley, CA; Brooklyn Center, MN; Cambridge, MA; Washington, DC.** Rubin, Leslie and DeFazio, Bill. “A Study on Reassigning Traffic Enforcement from the Montgomery County Police Department to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation,” Office of Legislative Oversight, P 21, https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/2021_Reports/OLOReport21-10.pdf.