

March 4, 2023

Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senator Guzzone:

Montgomery Community Media (MCM) would like to express our strong support for Senate Bill 874, which would establish Community Safety Works as an ongoing program within the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Established as a budget initiative within the Department, Community Safety Works has already provided valuable assistance to nonprofit organizations, businesses, and local governments through targeted investments in crime prevention that impact community safety.

Unfortunately, Montgomery County has seen a growing increase in incidents of crime and safety issues in recent years. According to an October 2022 Montgomery County Public Safety Committee Report, violent crime increased 13.4% in 2022 and all forms of robbery, including carjacking increased significantly from 2021. Firearm-related crimes increased by 20% and drug-related arrests have increased by 56% since 2021. These alarming trends have only continued, if not worsened since that report.

Given these worrisome trends, the Community Health and Safety Works grant program is even more critical than ever to combat the public safety issues in our county. I commend DHCD for creating innovative approaches to addressing the public safety issues we are all experiencing. The grant provides an opportunity to empower community organizations and businesses to play a part in the prevention of crime.

Through the grant we received, MCM will be able to install a new security camera system in our Rockville headquarters. This is a critical upgrade to our security infrastructure, and we are very appreciative to DHCD for providing the funds for us to make these necessary upgrades. The presence of security cameras in and around our building is a significant crime deterrent, and if MCM were to ever have crime or safety issue any video footage would be available for us to share with the authorities. These type of safety initiatives not only prevent crime but also help authorities apprehend suspects more efficiently.

Again, this is to request a favorable report on SB874 to continue this valuable program. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jasmine White

Jasmine White
Chief Executive Officer