



May 6, 2021

Dear Chairman McKay and Members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors:

We write today on behalf of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington, (JCRC) the public affairs arm of the organized Jewish community representing over 100 synagogues, schools and institutions throughout our region. Since its inception in 1938, the JCRC has championed the cause of civil and human rights on the local, state and national levels. In recent years, and with increased intensity over the last 12 months, we have spoken out strongly in support of major reforms to address structural racism that permeates our law enforcement and justice systems. As articulated in our most recent policy statement on this issue, “As a community we expect those empowered to preserve and protect a just society for all its members to conduct themselves in keeping with the law they are charged to uphold, adhering to the highest standards of decency, accountability and responsibility.”

It is with these precepts in mind, that we share our disappointment at the lack of transparency in the process undertaken by the Board of Supervisors to select a new Police Chief. We echo the NAACP’s sentiments that, “the core of this process should have included meaningful public participation throughout the selection process. The trust and safety of the Fairfax community should have been the top concern.”

There must be adequate stakeholder input into a critical process such as this one, especially given the deep level of mistrust of law enforcement within minority communities. Soliciting written input from advocacy groups and sponsoring a hastily organized community call-in after the fact are completely insufficient measures. As things stand, Chief Davis enters this job with a significant trust deficit among those he will be charged to protect and serve.

As a general matter, we strongly object to continued lapses in transparency at various levels of Fairfax municipal governance. Our government is fundamentally of the people, for the people and by the people; right now, too many Fairfax residents ---- overwhelmingly minority groups --- repeatedly feel disenfranchised and disregarded by their elected representatives. As the JCRC has said in other instances, if the credo of One Fairfax is to be more than a mere slogan, public officials must live up to their obligations to promote transparency, inclusivity, and authentic equity in their deliberations and actions.

Moving forward, the JCRC, in concert with its coalition partners, will continue to demand, and expect, maximum transparency and accountability from the Fairfax County Police Department, the Board of Supervisors, and all other government officials and entities. Faith and trust must be restored, for the safety and well-being of all Fairfax residents.

Sincerely,

Ronald A. Paul, M.D.
JCRC President

Ronald Halber
Executive Director

Vicki Fishman
Director of VA Government and
Community Relations