



**Fraternal Order of Police
Montgomery County Lodge #35**

Testimony Opposing Bill 25-11

July 26, 2011

The Fraternal Order of Police Montgomery County Lodge #35 is the exclusive representative of police officers from the rank of Police Officer Candidate through Sergeant. We are here to offer testimony against Bill 25-11.

The very concept of a curfew is disrespectful to the vast majority of law abiding young members of our community. It is a horrible lesson in civics to punish the majority for the offenses of a few. To restrict the freedom and rights of the youth of Poolesville based upon events occurring in neighborhoods on the border of the District of Columbia is patently unfair. It will be a drain on already strained police resources and may expose our youth to even greater harm.

If there are problems in certain neighborhoods, the solution is to spend police resources on the problems there and not waste police resources on non-problems in other neighborhoods. When looking to other jurisdictions for practices we need to look at crime trends and patterns and take into account the social and economic conditions which feed into their problems, especially those conditions that do not exist here. We are not Detroit, Michigan. Well crafted, narrowly tailored curfews in areas of high crime may be options. But blanket solutions to specific problems result in the suppression of the individual rights of members of our community for no other reason than their age.

Enforcement of a curfew misdirects scarce police resources. There already exist laws allowing police officers to do their jobs. The pursuit of curfew enforcement will tie up officers who would otherwise enforce criminal and traffic laws or respond to other calls for service. Police officers will become babysitters for those whose only offense was to be *out* of their house beyond a given hour.

Police officers when they are working should be free and available to the entire community, to all ages, for emergencies and assistance. Currently, there is nothing preventing an officer from confronting any individual youth or group of youths at night when the officer feels the situation requires inquiry. We do it regularly.

Our children will be more vulnerable if they conceal their activities from parents and those tasked with protecting their safety. Neighboring jurisdictions without curfews will become magnets for late night activities taking our children even farther from home.

It is said, "The more laws, the more offenders." Banning lawful activities of residents of our County based upon their age is not a solution to problems of real crime. We join in opposing Bill 25-11. Parents are the appropriate authority to determine their children's level of freedom and responsibility, not government.