

Arlington County Board Meeting – Saturday, April 17, 2021, 8:30 a.m.

Public Comments

Oral Statement by Julius “J.D.” Spain, Sr., President of the Arlington Branch of the NAACP

To be clear, the community will benefit from a Chief of Police who will lead us *forward*. We do not need status-quo law enforcement cronyism or anyone who stagnates with practices that we know historically harm our communities, especially our Black and Latino community. Finding a quality Chief of Police and improving the community's confidence in law enforcement lies entirely the County Board and an open and transparent recruitment process. This has not occurred.

We need bold new leadership open to police reform because doing so might save a community member's life before it is lost or harmed.

As a combat-veteran who wore our nation's cloth for over 26 years, I remain puzzled about the utter silence from county leadership surrounding the [racial profiling](#) incident this past December of an African American retired veteran of the Armed Forces. This gentleman was also a former Capitol Hill Police officer. I ask, are you not perpetuating racial profiling?

To date, there has not been a formal public statement from any of you or the Acting Chief of Police to the community apologizing for the act of racial profiling. Nor has there been clarification to the public of actions being taken to protect Black and Brown residents from such targeting again. True leaders do not have a problem admitting failure or wrongdoing.

Whether you run on the platform of racial equity or not, issues of racial equity and justice are piling up outside your virtual door.

These reforms are not mere sound bites to add to a political resume.

They are a matter of life v. death, freedom v. incarceration, safety v. vulnerability, protection v. targeting in our communities.

I urge you to act on what we *need* to survive and thrive in the County we call home.

Thank you for your time.