

I am Dr. Sophia Marjanovic. I am of the Fort Peck Oceti Sakowin and Ipai tribes Indigenous to the United States. I am the daughter of a police officer and federal officer. I have a PhD in immunology and microbiology from George Washington University. I came to Maryland to do my PhD thesis training at the NIH in Bethesda, MD.

In 2012, I was attacked while I was holding my 10 day old newborn son and our abuser then almost shoved my sister down the stairs. I did what we are supposed to do and called the police. This began my journey as a law abiding citizen into the nightmare of dealing with domestic abusers on the police force and the retaliation they exert in coordination with our domestic abusers as a way to dominate and control survivors.

Despite begging the police to escort me out of the house, the police instead told me that our domestic abuser and his mother were leaving. As soon as the police left, our domestic abuser and his mother returned back to the house. My sister and I were terrified. We called the police again. One of the new officers was informed about domestic violence and finally escorted us out of the house.

Eventually, I lost custody of my son to our domestic abuser in the courts as the officer Freddie Charles, who has a history of domestic violence and is in charge of the Supervised Visitation Unit of the Anne Arundel County Sheriff's Department, worked in coordination with our domestic abuser to continue to exert domination and control over my son and me. Freddie Charles even claimed to the court that he fears for his life around me and that all officers of Anne Arundel County should fear for their lives around me because I video record all interactions with him and have been successful at getting unethical people reprimanded. As I have sought accountability for Officer Freddie Charles, I have encountered too many overwhelming challenges including testifying and successfully getting a provision in HB1016 in 2016 for civilians to get the outcomes of investigations of their grievances we file about police officers. I have since learned that the way the bill was written leaves many of us civilians without any ability to get the outcomes of the investigations. The Anne Arundel County Sheriff's Department even asked me how much I was willing to pay to see my son. In the courts, Judge Allison Asti cited that police are neutral witnesses and through her discretion, ruled that Officer Freddie Charles, a police officer with a domestic violence history getting paid overtime to attend our court hearings, had more credibility than me, a survivor of domestic violence. When I reported my son's disclosure of sexual abuse at his daycare in which his father had him enrolled, Ms. Brown of the Maryland Child Protective Service told me that she had taken my son, who was not even 3 years old yet, into a room by himself with her asking him direct questions. This is not the appropriate procedure to investigate child sexual abuse on children under 10 years old. When I told Ms. Brown this, she scoffed that I'm just going to have to get the law changed. That was back in 2015. It is now 2021. My son is now over 8.5 years old with no protection because you have not taken the protection of our children seriously. The last time I saw my son he had been diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease and was suffering due to the pain of not having it treated, I have been suffering for years to feel safe knowing that the police and courts don't protect survivors. I have even become completely debilitated where every single molecule in my

body feels to be in intense pain for weeks on end as I suffer to feel safe in my own body. I eventually became homeless and enslaved in human trafficking as a result of this grave injustice I have experienced from the police coordinating with my domestic abuser to exert domination and control over my son and me. I have been in therapy for years doing the work to try to heal, but when the system is so unsafe, I need the system to be repaired in order to feel safe.

Law enforcement is the field of work with the most domestic abusers. 40% of law enforcement are domestic abusers. Having survivors of domestic violence call police when we have a nearly 50% chance of encountering a domestic abuser is absurd. On average, 4 women are killed per day in the USA, mostly by a domestic abuser. Between 2009 and 2018, 80 percent of child victims of mass shootings died in incidents connected to domestic violence meaning that on average, 4 children per day are being killed by gun related domestic violence. Mind you, this is an underestimate of the children killed each day by domestic violence as guns are not the only way that children are killed.

I demand that you release ALL disciplinary records of ALL public employees in the state of Maryland so that we civilians may have real accountability. The police aren't the only problem. Social Workers, judges, prosecutors, public defenders, court clerks, etc. are part of a broken system systematically terrorizing the most marginalized people in Maryland.

I demand that you allow one party consent audio recording to truly allow for transparency and accountability in the state of Maryland in removing corruption from our public serving institutions.

I demand that you abolish the police. This system is broken and cannot be reformed. I demand that you appropriate funds to build safe houses for every 150 citizens for survivors of domestic violence to safely seek refuge. I demand that you appropriate funds to build an office where only specialists in the dynamics of domestic violence intervene in domestic violence and help survivors. Let's make sure those specialists don't have a history of domestic violence like 40% of law enforcement does.

I demand that instead of the police that you appropriate funds to send psychiatrists and psychologists to our systematically traumatized Native American, Black, Latinx, LGBTQ2S, disabled and poor communities. I also demand improved accountability mechanisms for such psychiatrists and psychologist first responders. I have successfully gotten an unethical psychologist determined a danger to the public, so I know we need improved accountability for protecting the public from unethical people in positions of power in Maryland.

I demand that instead of the police that you appropriate funds to community based programs for trauma informed conflict resolution and restorative justice. The United States was built on generations of traumatizing Native American, Black and Latinx people. Let's work to heal instead of punish those of us who are systematically traumatized.

References for statistics cited in this testimony:

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