



## Our Plan for a Safer Anne Arundel County

I want to build an Anne Arundel County where every resident feels safe—at home, at school, and on our roads. That's the first and most basic responsibility of government.

I'm proud of my work on County Executive Pittmann's team to make our county safer. We've made a lot of progress in the last few years. But there's more we can do: by modernizing our first responder services, investing in combatting the root causes of violence, and ensuring our justice system focuses on both accountability and successful reentry.

Public safety is often measured only by response times and arrest rates, but true safety is proactive. In Anne Arundel County, we face a rising number of traffic-related deaths (*43 in a recent year, significantly outpacing homicides*) and a mental health crisis that has effectively turned our detention centers into the county's largest mental health provider.

While we have one of the highest starting police salaries in the state, we still face recruitment gaps and a reliance on mandatory overtime—a policy failure that wastes money and leads to overtired, less effective officers.

Furthermore, our current "community policing" model often relies on specialized bureaus rather than officers consistently walking beats and building the deep, neighborhood-level trust necessary to solve and prevent crime.

We've made Anne Arundel County much safer, but we have room to grow - and I have a plan.

# How We'll Make Anne Arundel County Even Safer

## 1. Modernizing Law Enforcement and Recruitment

We have incredible law enforcement officers in Anne Arundel County - but we need more to keep our residents safe. We have the funding for some of these positions already, but need to fill them - and when we do, we need to focus our officers' time on building strong relationships with the communities they serve.

- **Tactical Recruitment:** We have one of the highest starting police salaries in the state, but we still don't have enough officers joining our ranks. That tells me the problem isn't just compensation, it's tactical recruitment. We'll look at the tactics used by agencies like our county public schools that have successfully closed recruitment gaps in recent years, pay attention to "quality of life" issues faced by officers, and work to make a strong pitch to new officers focused on mission, career longevity, and community fit.
- **True Community Policing:** As we improve staffing levels, we will work to shift from centralized "community relations bureaus" to true neighborhood-based policing. This includes walking beats and bike patrols where officers are integrated into the fabric of the community they protect, rather than just patrolling in vehicles.
- **Civilians for Civil Process:** To free up sworn Sheriff's deputies for critical public safety tasks, we will work to transition the service of eviction notices and other non-dangerous civil paperwork to trained civilian process servers.
- **Ending Mandatory Overtime:** We will prioritize filling vacancies to eliminate the safety risks associated with exhausted officers. My goal is to eliminate mandatory overtime in my first term as County Executive - a practice that costs us money and makes us less safe.
- **Expanding the Police Accountability Board (PAB):** I will advocate to end the exclusion of residents with past felony convictions from serving on the PAB. Lived experience is an asset in oversight, and a 30-year-old drug conviction should not bar a resident from serving their community.

## 2. Interrupting the Cycle of Violence

Addressing crime means addressing its root causes and treating gun violence as the public health crisis it is.

- **Expanding Violence Interruption:** We're running great "violence interruption" programs in Eastport and West County that have been incredibly effective at reducing gun violence. These programs rely on community leaders—not just government—to mediate conflicts before they escalate. I'm a believer that when

something delivers results, you build on it, so we will expand these programs in Brooklyn Park and other high-needs areas.

- **Cabinet-Level Reentry Coordination:** We will create a cabinet-level position to coordinate diversion and reentry programs across all departments that touch this work. This ensures that when someone is finished serving their time, they have the support needed to re-enter society and avoid recidivism. Right now we have impactful programs to prevent recidivism, but coordination between all partners must be improved.
- **Pressure for State Crisis Beds:** We will lobby the state to open more acute mental health crisis beds. Our detention workers are currently performing the work of mental health professionals—an untenable situation that serves neither the staff nor those in crisis.

### 3. Fire and Emergency Response Excellence

Our firefighters deserve the staffing and equipment necessary to meet national safety standards so that they can respond faster - and more effectively - any time there's an emergency.

- **Improving Staffing by Pursuing the SAFER Grant:** We will aggressively pursue federal SAFER grants to reach the national standard of four personnel per fire truck. We are committed to achieving this standard with career firefighters, while recognizing that our volunteer fire companies also provide critical support to our communities, and building productive and collaborative relationships between career and volunteer firefighters.
- **Tactical Recruitment:** We should be creating a pipeline of local firefighters and EMTs by recruiting in our high schools. Seniors, who often have partial schedules, could get volunteer hours and go through much of the EMT training while still in school - setting them up for a solid career protecting the communities they love after graduation.
- **Modernizing the Fleet:** We will evaluate our apparatus needs, including exploring more efficient fire trucks that are better suited for some of our narrower roads. This is important for some of our older communities as well as communities that want more traffic calming devices.

### 4. Ending Traffic Deaths as a Public Safety Priority

Traffic-related deaths are one of the biggest public safety problems in Anne Arundel County - they're roughly four times more frequent than homicides.

- **Safe Routes to Community Centers:** We will prioritize sidewalk and shared-use path construction, specifically targeting areas like the Ritchie Highway crossing, to ensure children can safely reach community centers and schools.
- **Reforming Traffic Control:** We will update the Neighborhood Traffic Control Program. Currently, the program prioritizes the "throughput" of cars; our administration will prioritize the safety of the families living on those streets through speed islands and humps where requested.
- **Staffing Crossing Guards:** We will ensure full and consistent staffing of school crossing guards through competitive pay and recruitment, acknowledging their vital role in protecting our youngest residents.
- **Removing Natural Hazards:** We will put more resources into trimming the trees along our roads and power lines. These natural hazards are unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists when they obstruct sidewalks. This is especially important in the more rural parts of our county where narrow roads, and deep ditches beside them, mean that swerving to miss a downed tree or limb could be deadly.