

Public Comment for June 13, 2023

Dr. Karla Kornegay, MBA

“Bad boys, bad boys, whatcha gonna do? Whatcha gonna, whatcha gonna do when they come for you?”

That is the song and words used to open the show “Cops” along with scenes of the police chasing down and arresting the “bad boys.” Viewers assumed those apprehended would be spending some time in the slammer. Today? Not so much in Charles County. We have more crime than ever, and those who commit the crimes simply cycle through the revolving door of the criminal justice system, hurting those of us who are still law-abiding citizens. Thanks to some of our leadership in Annapolis attempting not to target African American men. If they do the crime, they should do the time. It is actually quite simple.

We understand that there have been many senseless killings of African-American men and it is outrageous, but when someone has violated the law, regardless of age (everyone knows when they are doing right or wrong, as they all know better) they should be properly held accountable. When they are released, they go back into the community and commit the same crime or kill someone. Stop the foolishness and hold folks accountable accordingly. Why have rules in place, written in black and white, if they are not going to properly enforced? It is not fair to those of us who want to live and actually keep what we have worked hard for.

In the last few years, media personalities have described violent riots as “mostly peaceful protests.” Our collapsing border with Mexico is awash in criminals and drugs. Criminals and/or gangs loot and rob retail establishments ranging from 7-Elevens to major shopping outlets. Car jackings have exploded in some cities. Philadelphia, for example, witnessed ninety car jackings in the first two weeks of 2022, and now Charles County and surrounding areas are seeing the same issues.

Murders have also skyrocketed during this time, breaking records in cities around the country and in our County. For example, criminal gangs in other states are even looting freight trains, breaking into containers, and stealing massive numbers of packages.

Some in our government, from the feds to the locals, seem oblivious to these outrages. Others seem puzzled or ignorant, believing, for instance, that more gun control will reduce crime, closing their eyes to the fact that our most violent cities like Chicago, New York, and Baltimore already have strict gun laws.

Then there are the officials, the police, and the prosecutors, who deal with this problem on an hourly basis. “It’s just crazy,” ran a recent ABC News headline on how twelve major cities hit all-time homicide records in 2021. People are getting picked up for gun possession and other real crimes and they are just let out repeatedly.

Arrests have taken a hit because so many officers everywhere have resigned their positions in the last few years. Defunding police departments and denigrating the work of officers doubtless contributed to this crime wave. Moreover, the judges, district attorneys, and other prosecutors who are allowing a type of catch and release system for criminals have added to these mounting violations of the law.

“Catch and release” allows minors and others who have committed certain felonies to serve no jail time. There is no form of real rehabilitation of which I have heard. These felonies include such crimes as burglary, sexual assault, grand theft, and robbery. “Catch and release” allows offending minors and others to return repeatedly to the streets, adding to the rise of crime in the County.

Some of us may be mystified by such policies when we consider that they inflict the greatest punishment on those who are the most vulnerable. Despite many tactical complexities, the strategic solution to our wave of crime is simple. Back the police. Enforce the law. Make arrests. Prosecute criminals. Deliver appropriate punishment. Most of all, aim at protecting law-abiding citizens, not the criminals who intend to do them harm.

Thank you,

Karla Kornegay