

Miranda Jones: Where the theme of this episode is 'we keep us safe' - which is a common refrain that activists really began using last summer when the question was posed, 'who keeps us safe?' - you may have heard activists say, 'we keep us safe'. On this particular episode, we're going to be talking about ending cash bail and the creation of a civilian oversight authority sometimes called the citizens police review board. We're going to talk about ways that we can creatively do this in different ways in which we can most effectively and transparently serve the Black and brown um community. Before we jump right in I prepared a quick video that I would like to show to you all as it relates to ending cash bail. Some of us may not know that there are lots of people, particularly black folks and in some instances maybe a few white folks, who lost their lives because they were not released from jail because they couldn't pay bail. And so I just wanted to kind of take a moment to reflect on the people on the screen. Some of them actually died right here and in Winston Salem Forsyth County so keep that in your mind. You're going to see a name that you may not have heard of before, you also see some of the more the more national names that we know that are now ancestors and I do believe that they're among us. So I want you to just kind of reflect on it and maybe take a moment to take it all in as you engage with what we're going to be talking about this evening. Okay Sam it won't let me screen share so you might have to share it. Okay, I'm gonna share my sound and we're ready to go. So as I stated, some of these are national names that we know of we know of Sandra Bland, we know of Kalief Browder, um I just learned about Jim McCormick. I would encourage all of you in the viewing audience to google Jim McCormick, uh she actually was a white woman who died here and whose family was unable to post bail. So I want you to really kind of lean into these individuals as we have this discussion. Real quick, I'm going to allow um the esteemed panelists to introduce themselves. I'll start with Brother Shaun.

Shaun (He/Him): Hey good afternoon everybody. Thank you for having us. I'm Shaun McMillan and my pronouns are he/him, just representing Fayetteville Pack and the co-founder of a Fayetteville Police Accountability Community Task Force and happy to be here, happy to build with the rest of the community, so thank you.

Miranda Jones: Okay, Sister Kathy

Kathy Greggs Co-Founder/ President: Hello everyone, my name is Kathy Greggs. I'm the co-founder and president of Fayetteville Police Accountability Community Task Force and I'm so happy that you allowed us to have this space so we can do whatever we can for the betterment of the people and continue to hold everyone accountable, thank you.

Miranda Jones: Okay thank you. Allencia

Allencia (She, Her): Hi everyone my name is Allencia Hennit. I'm here representing Triad Abolition Project and FCPARC and I'm just so happy to be a part of this conversation on holding police accountable and I just look forward to discussing.

Miranda Jones: Emily

Emily Thompson: My name is Emily Thompson, pronouns are she/her. I'm on the board of directors of the Forsyth County Community Bail Fund and we are so happy to be here working with everyone else in the community on these important issues.

Miranda Jones: and Julie

Julie Brady: my name is Julie, like Emily said, I'm on the board of the Forsyth County Community Bail Fund and like she said, we're very happy to be here and be able to talk about these issues that harm so many people.

Miranda Jones: Okay, so let's jump right in. So you know as an educator, it is really my goal to make sure that information is accessible, right, and a lot of times in this work we know we're talking about really big terms, we're thinking creatively, we're imagining a different society um and some of the language people aren't always familiar with because the reality is we have to live, we have to survive, and hopefully we thrive, right. So when we talk about a citizen's, uh what they call a police review board, um I put a link up that I would love for everybody to check out, um to our local citizens police review board that kind of talks about when they meet, what they're designed to do, and kind of how they operate. Now, one of the most, um I guess interesting things is that the people who are on this board, nothing against them, it's certainly not personal- I don't know any of you, um these people are appointed by the mayor, right? And so that can be very tricky that we have people who are appointed and we don't really know the rhyme or reason behind their appointments, right, we don't know if they were picked because they are super progressive or we don't know if they were picked because they're super conservative, we just don't know how they ended up there, right. We can see that there's a certain kind of racial demographic, like maybe there's a little bit of intentionality in having one or two Black women, maybe one or two Black men, a couple of white women. I didn't see anybody on there that's Latinx, I didn't see any other racial groups represented but it's kind of a fog around all of that, right, and so one of the things that I've been freely sharing with the group is one of my you know elder comrade brothers, Brother Kim Rashid- he and I laughed maybe about three years ago he said, you know Miranda, I tried to get on that board, he said, but they wouldn't let me. And I'm like your last name is Rasheed, right, you know maybe they thought you were part of some groups that people struggle with, some groups that kind of have a lot attached to them, you know people don't really know the history behind how you got the last name Rasheed and not that it should matter but I was like oh that could be sticky. Well then I applied for some stuff, I didn't apply for this board because it's not really a lot of what I do and I got declined like they turned me down, I said oh, but by this time I'm making noise in the city so it's kind of like how do these people get on this board? What is the process? You know, are there other people involved in how these people get selected? Are they the friends of people on city council? Are they the friends of some of the, you know, business owners in the city? Are they friends to, I mean the county commissioner in which we know we're not talking about the county but y'all let's be honest these people talk. They know each other. Like some of them have lots to lose, right? So, the average person might say, okay I got it Miranda, you told me that there's this board if I'm understanding this, and I'll jump to y'all in a second, this board looks at what? Do they look at issues of police misconduct and say okay this police was bad and then

Miranda Jones: after that what happens? Does anything happen? Um, when something goes wrong and as FCPARC has been talking about, why should there be an independent committee? So uh, whoever wants to jump in- um I'm gonna go to well, Like I said whoever wants to jump in- y'all can respond.

Kathy Greggs Co-Founder/ President: Um, I'm gonna let Shaun go first because when we decide to reimagine Fayetteville as a whole of independent oversight versus the citizen review board- um I'll let him discuss how he felt reimagining Fayetteville with that.

Miranda Jones: Okay talk to us Shaun.

Shaun (He/Him): Yeah so that's that's a good question that you posed because we run the caution of setting up boards that are ineffective, facades that are storefront for internal affairs arms of police where people think that they're empowered to make decisions or be a part of the process but they're really not. And those examples are plentiful, if you see what happened last year there were plenty of cities that already had citizen review boards that were embroiled in the same type of controversies that we have here in North Carolina, the same types of injustices. I'll take it even further, if you go back to listen to what Nacole says, that's the National Association for Civilian Oversight and Law Enforcement- they've documented that this idea of oversight has been around since the 1920s. Way back in 1920 they figured out, yeah we need to have some oversight of police, back when in the northeast some police organizations were getting broad and were corrupt. In the 1970s, some of these organizations started to get real power, to become empowered, to have bodies of oversight that had authority. So 1920s, 1970s realized that in North Carolina we still don't have bodies with authority, oversight bodies with authority or true independence.

Miranda Jones: We have some Black bodies out in the street, right, and they're dying in the jails.

Shaun (He/Him): Yeah we have plenty of those, too many, but we don't have entities of true or independent oversight here in North Carolina. So if you back up a little bit, look at the fact that we've already documented what an ineffective and a toothless organization looks like and whether you go back to Charlotte in the the uprising, whether you go back to what happened in Greensboro a few years ago, with the city council having to fight for the ability to look at video coverage or video footage, uh we still see over and over again what a toothless and and non-independent body looks like and what that results in- but we keep running ourselves in the same to the same brick wall, we're not demanding true oversight. So we really have to define for our communities what oversight looks like. For us in Fayetteville, we realized that we didn't want to emphasize just putting a review board in place. Why do that when there are at least six or seven other review boards in North Carolina with no real authority? With citizens that are part-time they have sometimes trouble getting a quorum and they are really only accessing internal affairs documents that aren't really even conducting investigations- we're not asking for that but what we're demanding here in Fayetteville is an oversight authority with trained practitioners, with investigators, with people with the ability to know how the knowledge and

Shaun (He/Him): the full-time capacity to look into injustices and also to have oversight of the police and their policies and be able to make recommendations for systemic change and policy change- and not just uh, not just play whack-a-mole as the the police commit injustices. So the model as we reimaged justice for Fayetteville, the model we chose is one where there is both an investigative arm, CPOA is what we call it- the Civilian Police Oversight Authority and then we chose to to have them with resources with independence then steward the development later of a review board of citizens that are on that part-time function that still have a say in what law enforcement looks like and still are able to look into incidences of injustices. That's what we came up with or the model, and every city is going to be different but in North Carolina we need to stop asking for crumbs, we need to stop asking for models that have proven ineffective. It's easy to look at models all around the country that are going through what we went through 20 or 30 years ago. And there's no reason for us to ask for pinto, in 1970s model pento. When we're in the year 2021 and the society as a whole has realized that our justice system is in need of reform and we need policy and substantial change to back that.

Miranda Jones: Kathy, do you want to add to that? You're muted.

Kathy Gregg Co-Founder/ President: Yes I do want to add to that. Um, when we started to do our research it took us about a good nine months for us to research this and the main barriers that we came across was the statute for personnel records and filing and being able to look at police misconduct in their own individual files. Okay um, we were lucky to have a great team with us when we produced this and was able to present it to the special counsel here in the City of Fayetteville in July. Um, we had Attorney Don Blaygrove give us certain case studies to show us how we can implement this at the local level without waiting on legislators to decide based off of the North Carolina statute 160-1668A. Then we also had Dr. Kimberly Mctarium from Save Our Sons assist us with presenting it and the way to look at it for the citizen review board portion of how the citizen review board does not work. And then, we also invited Val Applewhite to assist us when it came to who we need to talk to about getting this done locally. Our local officials are saying they can't do it but they can do it- the same way they have binding resolutions, they can have a binding resolution for this. Okay we went through the process of actually coming up with a city that we decided that mirror us and we came up with Miami Dade in Florida which was the best one to mirror use based on our population and based on the budget. So our city budget for our police department is 58 million dollars. As Shaun said, if we hire the Civilian Police Oversight Authority which is two investigators, private investigators, one attorney, okay and an admin data person, that is only taking one percent from our police department. So that means when we're talking about defunding the police that's what we're talking about. Why not take that one percent, right, get transparency with the people for civilians, right, because we're saying we cannot allow you to police yourself, we cannot allow the police to continue to police themselves up when people are dying, we have lawsuits that we're paying because of misconduct. Okay, and then, not only that, it's no transparency. You can't say a citizen review board has transparency when the recommendations come directly from the Ia and are you getting all the information from the Ia. Okay, so we have to make sure we understand that that's the difference- when we're saying Civilian Police Oversight Authority

Kathy Greggs Co-Founder/ President: and a citizen review board because both of those will be together just like the police advisory board- why would we have that? That's still not allowing us to police our police up.

Miranda Jones: Okay, Sister Allencia, do you want to chime in?

Allencia (She, Her): Yes, I completely agree with everything that was stated because have you guys ever heard the statement, you know, when pigs fly- When I was going through this information, I decided to come up with the analogy that pigs are going to hold other pigs accountable when pigs fly- which is never. And a big problem is how can you create an entity that's going to hold the police accountable and that entity, the citizen review board itself, doesn't even have the same funding and power as the police that they're trying to hold accountable? It really is a set up for failure. It really is designed to not work and be ineffective. And a lot of the times, the issues with these citizen review board now stated is that a lot of these people are in bed together and they're in cahoots and it's a conflict of interest- we should not have police chiefs or people working with police selecting people to be on the citizen review board because the people that should be on citizen review boards are the most marginalized people who are endangered by the police, from the police- who are being killed by the police. You know, and these are the people who actually have the motivation and the passion to seek out, to do these investigations, to get justice for people. And it's not going to be people who are buddy buddy with these people, at all. You know another thing that I thought was interesting is how citizen review boards don't have the power to subpoena people and get, for instance body cam body cam footage, a lot of that stuff is not public and it's not public because it's obviously something that they're trying to hide- it's all designed to protect the police. Police are afraid. They protect each other and we cannot have citizen review boards or civilian oversight authorities that keep on not having the power to get the evidence they need to hold people- hold police accountable and we cannot keep having these civilian oversight authorities that don't have the money to fund the people doing the investigations because as we stated, this is a full-time job- and these people need compensation. So that's what I have to say for right now.

Miranda Jones: Um, I wanted to expound upon a couple of things because, admittedly, this is my weak area- but one thing that people I think people fail to look at when they talk about the police and we hear this rhetoric, you know people always talk about gangs, right, and I always tell people the police are a gang- I would even say they probably were the first gang and people really don't understand the origins of police, right, and I think a very interesting thing about it is that there's a power dynamic here, so you have power keeping power with power, right? So when I looked at the citizens review board here I encourage everybody to look and see who's on it, uh go to your facebook, see who these people are. When I looked at it I said, okay wait a minute- if these people are appointed and they're appointed by some city council members who receive money from the police associations, right, so people who were campaigning and they may have gotten a thousand dollars, like we understand that I think the Eastwood representative got a thousand dollars from the, I think was the Southern Police Association, somebody correct me if i'm saying that name wrong, we have my representative, Representative Mundy, who received funding from the police association, right, and then if i'm

Miranda Jones: missing somebody y'all let's put it out there on the line- um we have some who said, look I spoke out and they wouldn't give me any money so mayor pro tem, you know, she spoke out about some of the the violence that was recorded um with Black people and they didn't give her any more money, right? So if these folks are appointed by people who are taking money from the police then as I think since Allencia alluded to, you have the police policing the police, right? Now, in terms of this power dynamic- if the police are policing the police and they are in power, and as a friend told me years ago, he said Miranda, a lot of people don't understand this, he said police really aren't designed to keep down crime in the Black community- they're designed to keep Black folks out of the white community, and a lot of people are not gonna like that but I'm gonna say that, right, so if this this kind of power dynamic is still in play, is that why there's this this kind of problem with the language of defund? Is there this problem because I think a lot of people in their mind hear, you're taking away my safety- you're keeping Brothers like Shaun, you're not helping me keep him out of my neighborhood, you're not keeping Allencia, Miranda, and Kathy from you know robbing me because you took money from the police, right. So surely, those who I have voted for, right, those who I have you know played a part in them getting elected, to keep to have power, are gonna maintain that power. So I think part of this is there's a paradigm of stripping away power, right. So when we start talking about that, people get really uncomfortable, right? Now, I want to lean into something that Sister Kathy was speaking about because we most recently um had this experience and I'll share this with the people- we were invited to the Public Safety Committee Meeting and um there was this push to get the subpoena power, right? And um, there was no talk about the independent part, right, there was no talk- like that wasn't on the agenda, wasn't part of the discussion and a lot of times, what I want people to know is that we don't always have the benefit of knowing exactly what we're walking into because the dynamic of power (sorry y'all I'm a teacher on talk with my hands) but the dynamic of power is that they're not gonna tell you, I'm gonna ask you about this, right, now a good activist always has to be prepared, right, because politicians are savvy- like that's what you know we want something, it's their job to keep us from getting it- homage to my mentor Brother Feel for that line, right, so they want to keep us from getting it. So they're not going to tell you, oh y'all show up we're going to talk about this this this this this right, they're going to say, oh we're going to talk about this and you got 10 minutes, oh you got three minutes, right. Now, meanwhile other people have 30 minutes, you know, so some of my comrades know what I'm talking about, they have 30 minutes but we got three, right? So we get in this position where we're trying to get both of these things, the independent piece and the subpoena piece, right, so Sister Kathy, if you were kind of expand upon exactly what city council can do, right, to get this piece because they kept saying, well do you want to take it to the legislator? It failed in Charlotte, it failed here, so it's kind of like- are you saying well, you know we gonna take it but we know that ain't gonna pass anyway because that's kind of what it felt like, just like I said just being a teacher, like you know we gonna take it up there so we can shut y'all up, we can say we tried but you know leave me alone with this. Kathy, help me understand exactly what they can do because a lot of times they will point to ordinance, they will point to policy, they will point to laws, and they don't tell the people all of it can be changed and I'm going to be quiet now because I'm getting passionate.

Kathy Greggs Co-Founder/ President: Miranda, Miranda- I'll tell you girl- we can go in the trenches together. But yeah you are correct. You are correct. And I'm happy you brought this up because several weeks ago at our city council meeting, I did address the fact that we wanted to have a civilian police oversight and my mayor actually made a comment back to me saying, hey we can't establish that- we have to send it up to legislative, right. And then of course, my Brother Shaun interrupted and said, well that's a lie, right? so which we have been advocating here for almost a year now- hey you're lying, so we've been going back and forth since 2018 on this of why we need it, right, but then we have to make sure we understand the law, so like I said, North Carolina Statute 160-168 says that you can review personnel files ,right, from the individual people that work in your city and in your county, okay just so you know that- you can review their personnel records. Okay, now when we're talking about how we can maneuver this way, all the way through, looking at footage it's called a pro se, right, so you get the individual that wants to review their case because they're making a complaint and this is what I typed up in the actual crb ordinance, we actually typed up a whole ordinance for the local people to actually do an application process and everything- okay, so if I want to view my video footage- I go get a pro se, i get the documents, I bring them to you, right, because I had access to it- you review it as a citizen review board and decide. That's so easy, right? Instead of us saying, oh you gotta get subpoena power, why do I need subpoena power when I'm the individual doing a complaint? So I have to give it to you. So that's how you maneuver yourself away from what we're talking about. Now, the North Carolina personnel records, right, you don't have to get subpoena power to review the records because guess what? If that individual worked for your city or your county, you're supposed to be able to see their misconduct as a personnel person. So that's where the statue is coming at. And luckily, I had Attorney Don Blackrow break it down to me and we worked together on how I should present this because if I'm an individual and I can get my own footage and my own information and I can give it to the citizen review board and we actually show them how we can upload it in the actual data portal, so they can review all the documents that I made a complaint on myself, right. So that's how easy it is. It's too easy to do this instead of waiting, right, but like you said, we have officials that want to divert us and tell us we can't do this- we can't have this, but that's a lie. You can do this. The same way that you can go and build the stadium is the same damn way you can put a citizen review board in there and there's nothing else to talk about because that is facts- you would take our money and our taxes to build this but you're telling me the money that I paid a police department can't pay civilians? That is a lie. That is a lie, right.

Miranda Jones: I'm glad you clarified that because one of our main objectives is to let the people know you got power, right. You have power to confront these people because this is the paradigm, y'all, our elected leaders are acting like we work for them- we don't work for them they work for us- right? They get this little stipend or whatever to work for us. We are the people, right? And so one of the things that, well another thing that we find is that a lot of times we kind of get to run around with this. So whether it's at the last meeting we like feel like we're going like a mouse, just going going going going going, and they tell us this, go look over here, we can't do this because it is with this, you got to have this, you gotta have that, oh we need data, then we give the data, they take our data, they say it's their data and we say, oh really? Really? So all these hours this is your data, right? All of a sudden it was their grand idea

Miranda Jones: but we recognized that throughout all of this- the people have not gotten anything. Okay, so for me, you know and for the people in my city, I want y'all to understand that we are simply saying two things the way that this board citizens police review board works- is not working for the people- is working for power- it's working for police- we wanted it to be independent and we want there to be subpoena power and they can do both of those things- there is no reason why it can't happen, it is very attainable. So I want the people to understand that very clearly. I want you to get out of his mind thinking I'm gonna post on facebook, IG, twitter and I'm gonna call them pigs, this, that, and the third, without doing anything press into, you know what let me contact FCPARC and let them know like we want that. It needs to be independent. There needs to be the subpoena power and stop sending us around in circles. Julie and Emily, do y'all want to jump in and add something here or Brother Shaun.

Emily Thompson: I would just add that all these systems are connected and that's something that we see a lot- is that people who are victims of police misconduct usually end up dead or in jail- and then when they end up in jail, that when they have a bond set that they can't pay and so that's how we kind of see both of these issues overlapping.

Miranda Jones: okay

Allencia (She, Her): I wanted to talk about briefly an example of police not being held accountable and a citizen suffering the consequences. On March the 2nd, 2020 in Winston Salem there was a man by the name of John Mackey Jr who was violated by the police for listening to music in his car. He was minding his own Black business and boom, the police as they do, come and they don't like you just being Black and being free and so the police basically, you know, took him out of his car, tased him, put their forearm on his neck, you know stopping his blood flow, and kicked him, hit his back- he sustained back injuries, he actually in the process, also you know of course, had a very expensive bond bill that he had to try to pay. It was just, it really completely altered his life. He was on his second strike, so he talked about in the interview that if this situation had gone further and they had actually continued with the charges, it would have been his third strike and we all know that that means you're going to prison for possibly life. And then in this time, you know after getting out of prison, he started a lawn business and you know just did things to get his life together and then had this interaction with the police- where now he has back injuries, and now he can no longer work. And the police didn't get any type of justice, or any type of accountability, any type of consequences- the charges were actually dropped before people could even see the body footage.

Miranda Jones: didn't the officer resign?

Allencia (She, Her): Yes, the officer did resign but the charges were dropped- um and the public didn't get any of the body cam footage- he didn't even get any of the body cam footage knowing that this happened to him, and then he got a settlement that was like a ten thousand five hundred dollar settlement, his bail was ten thousand dollars, so he didn't get any extra money to basically compensate for the fact that he now has a back injury, he can't work you know, and it's just, it's just really messed up and this is the type of thing that happens when

Allencia (She, Her): police are not held accountable. They just go on, just ravaging people's lives, you know, and get away with it. And when he spoke to the magistrate at the police office or whatever, um he asked him, you know, what am I being charged for? And one of the police officers said that police can do whatever they want. And this is the type of attitude they have and this is the truth, this is it, I mean it does appear that they can do whatever they want because so far they've been able to do what they want and no one's checked them and the things are supposed to check them don't check them. I was reading that when they do try to hold these people accountable, the police chief has to say whether or not the findings are accurate enough to basically give consequences to the police officers. The police chief. Now, we already established that police are gangs, so like we said, the police trying to hold the police accountable- pigs holding pigs accountable- that's not realistic. That's not going to do anything for anybody but the. So this is just one of the examples of, you know, the bullshit that's been going on.

Miranda Jones: Absolutely. And let me take this to the next level for us- there was a bill introduced and I want to say it was about Senator Paul Lowe but somebody correct me if i'm wrong, around this footage, right, around, I don't know if he, I don't know if he proposed this so somebody please in the chat or whatever correct me, let me know if that's right or wrong, some of y'all researchers and scholars, uh that kind of limits access to this footage. But I'm gonna flip it a little bit- now we've been talking about how there's this bill that limits this access to what the public can see, what the media- uh okay thank you for trying- what the media can have access to, but here in the city, they want folks to give them access to surveil people, right. So there's this new push that says, oh sister, Sister Marvel, you know we want to keep y'all safe. So if you have what's this thing called, ring or you have- I can't even think of the other other stuff because I can't afford it- but all these other cameras that are connected to your wi-fi, let us tap into it because we want to keep you safe. Now, as I think Brittney has always alluded to or mentioned directly, um they're not telling that you probably that you allowing them to have that level of access could potentially result in your own family members being arrested, right. It could result in more black and brown bodies being in jail, being exposed to COVID, being murdered by people that work in jail, and maybe even prison, right. So there is this glaring contradiction with what the people can see, yet they want access, right, to your camera system- however you keep your home safe if you believe that really works- but does anybody want to expound upon that contradiction- anybody can like strong in that area. Think on that, but right you do that I'm gonna point to Shaun. Shaun you wanted to add something.

Shaun (He/Him): Yeah, I just wanted to speak on HB 972. House Bill 972 was passed into law back in 2016. That was the first police accountability campaign that I worked and there were people all over the state that were pushing against it- uh ACLU, Susanna Birdsong, Raleigh PACT was fighting hard against it back in 2016, sea act down in Charlotte just been through the uprising was saying this is wrong, this is unjust, it's gonna it's gonna lead to injustice in the future. And our legislator back then, the same ones that passed HB2 and all that other nonsense, right, went ahead and passed HB972. So years later, um fast forward to today, I think next week or sometime in the coming weeks, the state supreme court is going to hear a challenge to parts of HB972, that is a result of activists fighting in Greensboro for footage.

Shaun (He/Him): And as a result of a strong city council in Greensboro, a strong city council that had to be pushed by activists to challenge and say we need to see this footage in order to make an assessment of whether there was injustice or not. And HB972 is a law that will fall. It's not going to stand in North Carolina. It's going to fall eventually and we have to let our legislators know and we have to let our city council members know and our county commissioners know that they need to take a stand against unjust laws- that they can't allow something like HB972 to sit on the books for years while people languish in cages, unnecessarily, or why people die without having any justice or just investigations. So HB972 is going to fall. In the meantime, we have politicians playing a dangerous game and I can speak in Fayetteville, specifically, of a campaign that I'm seeing the mayor and council members like Chris Davis are saying that we're never going to have access to body camera footage. The issues of reform that you're bringing are suggesting that they are solutions looking for a problem, as if we don't have injustice in Fayetteville. So we have this dangerous, and these are people that are backed by some of the same people that you know backed by community members and has strong showing from the Black community to be elected- they are casting disparagement on reform issues or reform efforts- and what I'd say to anybody in Fayetteville that doesn't think that there's injustice- look at what the city council's reaction was when Joshua Oxendine was killed by the police last year. Look at the requests that were made to the city council for investigation in contrast to what the Greensboro City Council did, our city council decided to stay silent, to back the police in that and the Joshua Oxendine homicide- we've never even seen the footage of four policemen that apprehended him and resulted in his death- and we won't if they don't do their job and step up and show some accountability. And for them to resist setting up bodies of accountability, puts us even further behind, that's why we need bodies of accountability, that's why we need a CPOA because when it comes down to it and a citizen is murdered, you guys don't even want to push to see the footage, you guys don't even want to fight for the citizens, and uh there's just a dangerous game that's being played by these politicians who say people like Phil Berger are the problem. Phil Berger has never said anything about Fayetteville's review board or bodies. Phil Berger doesn't control the budget of the city council, he's not going to be the one that stops the resources that go to funding a CPOA. It is their own inaction, their own incrementalism, uh and their own assimilationist attitudes that hold progress back for the community. And we need to remember that also going into the polls in November. We've seen that have sat on their hands for the last, well for us in Fayetteville, there's been a call for review boards that have gone back to a consent order that was started in 2012. Okay, for all those city council members that have sat on their hands, some of them were even around back then, they need to be out of office this year and we need people that are accountable and that will stand for the people. And I've said a lot, I've said probably too much but there's definitely a lot that we have to do to press these officials to have some moral courage and some political will to get laws on the books- local legislation that is within their power to pass so that there's justice for our communities.

Miranda Jones: Absolutely and you know, I want to add and just say you know there's this interesting trifecta where you have our local city councils and then you have our state representatives and then it's kind of like you have the police because what what I've been paying attention to, I don't know if y'all saw the bill that talks about penalizing cities if they defund, I don't know if y'all seen that, right, and so I said, wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a

Miranda Jones: minute. And I told FCPARC we need to ask our local leaders to repudiate this, right. Then I got to thinking, I was talking to one of my elders and he said, you know what Miranda, he said you know your city council might actually like that because then if the state legislator says they will be penalized for defunding y'all then they can just tell y'all no because the state said it, right. I said you know what, you're on to something, I said your on to something. That's an easy out for them and they can keep getting this money from the police but here's the catch, and now I'm getting to my cash bail people, if they are not gonna defund, they're not gonna do anything creative or progressive like they always tell us, you know basically it's just 20 of y'all who want this, right. Then that means my people, my beautiful Black people, are still going to be incarcerated and as like the video I started with, what happens when you are incarcerated, or you know you they take you to, you know the county jail, and a lot of people seem to think that that means you're actually guilty, right, and I'm not so sure that that's how it's supposed to work in America- just because you're locked up doesn't mean you actually did it- like we lose sight of that, or maybe people just think when Black people are locked up, maybe they think they they did it or poor people, I don't know, right. So what it's telling me is that these people are going to be locked up and these are probably people who are already struggling- probably people who already don't have any money, right, who are already up against it- people who a hundred dollars might be a whole lot of money. And in the video I showed you a person who died because they could not pay a hundred dollars, right. You saw Sandra Bland, you saw Kalief Browder. So, my cash bail people who do this work, y'all constantly, excuse me, raise money to help people who can't pay bail. As an educator, it's super important to me because I think about how a child is going to be without their mother or father, right, you know, I hope that they have a great support system with grandmother, an auntie, an uncle or whatever, you know how we do, but if they don't have their mother or father- this is traumatic to the child, right. You know when I was a child, my mother went to prison in West Virginia, y'all she was caught photocopying some money but that's another story for the other day may she rested in peace- but you know this idea of a mother, you know being ripped from the child because she can't pay bail- what does that look like here in Forsyth County and why do we need to end it? I'm going to go to you Julie.

Julie Brady: Yeah I think you brought up a lot of popular misconceptions about bail, like I think that people have this idea that it's all like single men who don't have families or friends and they're just like these interlopers that come in from wherever and commit crimes then they're caught and put in jail. And like obviously that's not how it works. The people that are in the Forsyth County Jail are citizens, they are community members, they are husbands and fathers and brothers and sisters, you know they're us, they're people, they're just people. And I think you're totally right that people do think that pre-trial detention is supposed to be punitive, it's supposed to be a punishment and like it is in practice, it is a punishment but it's not supposed to be. It's supposed to be the waiting period before the trial happens, right, because everyone, about 85 percent of people incarcerated in North Carolina jails, are legally innocent -they haven't had a trial yet, you know, their case will be resolved if they are able to be bailed out, you know, the case it'll be dismissed or they will plead not guilty and have a trial or they will plead guilty- like their case will have a resolution regardless of whether they're detained pre-trial or not. And I think that's something that people don't really understand because they

Julie Brady: see charges like rape and murder which are always the ones that people are always very concerned about and they're like well we can't just let rapist murderers run free- and it's like these are people who are accused of crimes that they have not been convicted of. So where's the presumption of innocence in all of that? Not to mention that people with those really heavy charges, rape and murder, like they're not going to be offered a bond amount anyway- the judge is going to be like you are not able to pay any amount of money to get yourself out of jail. But for people who are on like misdemeanor larceny and probation violations and like simple assaults- it's like oh the judge says that you can go home, you're free to go home, you can go, oh you have to pay \$2,500- if you can't, you have to stay in jail for however many months until trial- and did we mention that there is a pandemic and we're not doing trials and we haven't done a trial in North Carolina- a jury trial since April maybe? So there's people that have been sitting there for almost a year feeling, you know probably coerced into pleading guilty just to get home just because they can't afford to pay the exit fee- essentially what bail is.

Miranda Jones: So Emily, are we criminalizing poverty? Is that what we're doing here?

Emily Thompson: Absolutely, yeah. I mean cash bail is-

Miranda Jones: Emily, we are having a hard time hearing you

Emily Thompson: Okay, I will refer to Julie to answer this one.

Miranda Jones: Okay Julie, are we criminalizing poverty?

Julie Brady: Yeah, that's literally what cash bail does- that's the effect that cash bail has because if you have two people that have the same charge, the same exact version of events- both have a \$2,500 bond- one is wealthy- one is not- the wealthy person gets to go home and the person who isn't gets to stay there. How is that justice? What stops one person from harming the community if they can pay \$2,500 and it doesn't apply to the other person? Like it just doesn't make sense, it's a completely arbitrary number and what you see a lot in first appearances, I interned with the public defender a couple years ago, and at first appearances, the public defender will be like, your honor- this person has told us that they can only afford a hundred dollars or fifty dollars or no money at all. And the judge will be like, oh okay, okay, okay, well I will change your bond- I will lower it from five thousand dollars to three thousand dollars- good luck. And like, A)- the money amounts still just do not make sense, completely arbitrary. And B)- that's not helpful to anyone, so it's just a practice of trapping people in jail because they can't pay. And like the amount of money that you pay- there are so many households in America who either can't afford money at all, like they're gonna miss rent or bills or anything, can't afford anything and then there's others who are like one paycheck away from poverty or eviction. And a thousand dollars, that's a lot- most people don't have a thousand dollars in their bank account.

Miranda Jones: Julie, what about, I'm telling a friend of mine this and her son actually runs a, he's a bail bondsman. So she was not happy about this work at all. So she said, no no Miranda, but they have payment plans, they got you, you can pay all that- this is something she went through this whole thing. And I'm literally sitting there as much as I love her, like if they don't have the money- they don't have the money. What are you talking about a payment plan? Julie, so can you clear that up? So if I don't have like \$100, what am I supposed to do? Like pay \$20 a week? How does this payment plan thing work?

Julie Brady: Um I can't speak to like the breakdown, specifically, individual bail bondsmen but so there's a statute that accommodates bail bonds companies and it allows them to pay like 10-15% of the total bond- so like it helps people get out of jail. Let me backup a little bit and explain a little bit about the money process by e-bail. So you have a \$2,500 bail, you can pay yourself \$2,500- the magistrate the clerk holds on to that until your case is resolved- if you don't miss any court appearances, then you get \$2,500 back- you get all of your money back. Okay. Now, if you get a bail bondsman, you only have to pay like 10-15 percent of \$2,500, I'm not good at math so I'm not going to say a number- but that money is gone forever.

Miranda Jones: \$250 that I don't have.

Julie Brady: Yeah, exactly. The bail bondsman keeps it and then if you miss court, you owe the bail bondsman \$2,500 and you get to go back to jail. So like that's the difference between what we're doing and what bail bonds do- like they're companies that like prey on people at their most vulnerable, getting money that they don't have. And it's so deeply ingrained into our system, the entire bail bond industry, that you'll hear judges and DA's be like, oh well I'll send a \$10,000 bond, that's only \$1,000- right, because they're relying on this third-party predatory industry. I'm so sorry about the cap, um that it just doesn't even occur to them that that's not justice and they shouldn't be doing that at all- they shouldn't be involved in the court process at all- like oh it's okay if we set this bond because they can just lose that money to a bondsman later- like that doesn't, it just doesn't make any sense. And it just makes it harder for people who don't have that money at all.

Emily Thompson: Yeah, and I would just add really quickly that that's just another form of supervision, right. When they're out and they owe the bondsmen and now if you don't show up to your court date you have someone else looking for you, might not be WSPD but I mean it might as well be, um and even if we're only paying bondsmen 10%, I mean the median bail amount in this country, I mean it's like 8 months of work for a low income person, so even if we're reducing that down to 10%- it's still it's still totally unattainable. And that's why we see so many people sitting pre-trial in Forsyth County and across the country.

Miranda Jones: And do y'all know- um because I don't know off-hand but as I was doing reading because I really got fascinated by this- like there's a very high percentage of people who actually return to court, right? So, it'd be like 80 some percent somewhere in there- like these people don't just like skip off because most of them are out of money. So it's not like, okay you know, I'm not gonna go to court, I'm just gonna go to Florida. Like that actually doesn't happen and

Miranda Jones: another layer, maybe y'all can speak to this, that a lot of these people, we've been working on this, are really dogged by mental health issues. Right, so when you see some of these people who can't get out and they're committing suicide- to me that's inhumane- so can y'all speak to and let the people know that people actually do return to court. Like some states have even gotten rid of the cash bill system, right, I don't know what it's paying for here but they want to hold on to that thing tight. Talk about that fact for the people.

Julie Brady: Yeah, so it's a little different in every state but I think like New Jersey has something like an 89% return rate, even without cash bail, they don't have cash bill anymore- or they do for like specific crimes- um and they they did not see like a an increase in Failures to Appear. And when you look at like bail funds across the country who have collected those statistics, and we're starting to collect those ourselves- just because people don't have personal money in this case and the outcome, like they don't have any money to lose if they miss a court date and they're still showing up to court. Like there's bail funds that have like a 95% return rate which is incredible and like that's kind of what we expect. And now it's a little bit different during the pandemic because like I said, nothing is really happening and court cases are not getting resolved or they're getting resolved really slowly. So like for us and I'm sure a lot of other funds, we have a lot of money just like tied up perpetually because there haven't been jury trials in almost a year. So that's kind of slowed down like our own funds data collection. We have gotten back more checks than we forfeited like by a pretty decent percentage, um we're not gonna have complete data on that for who knows how long um because we bailed out so many people and all of their cases are still going. But yeah, in places that have ended cash bail, they have not seen a corresponding spike in Failures to Appear and they have not even seen a corresponding spike in crime.

Miranda Jones: And that was shocking to me and I read somewhere, I think this might have been an article by the ACLU, this question I'm gonna pose this to Emily- is the cash bill system constitutional? I mean that might be a big question but I'm kind of like uhh, like it's you know is this antiquated system even constitutional for the people? Can you speak to that?

Emily Thompson: That's a hard question, that's a big one.

Miranda Jones: Um Kathy says no it's not and I'm agreeing with Kathy. I don't get in trouble

Emily Thompson: Yeah, it's complicated and I think, I think we should make it unconstitutional. Whether or not it's explicitly allowed or disallowed in our constitution- we have the ability to change that- it's a flexible document. And I think we've now proven nationwide that bail doesn't make people safer. People are not inherently dangerous because they've been arrested for something. And you know we have the power, like we were talking about earlier, um they work for us and so I think we can make this really clear that this shouldn't be happening anywhere.

Miranda Jones: Kathy, do you want to expound upon Amendment Right 18?

Kathy Greggs Co-Founder/ President: Yes so let me make sure I'm correct, but I think the amendment rights number 18 or number eight- it says you have the right to get a bail reduction. Oh I'm sorry number eight, yep there we go. So it is Amendment Right 8 that states in the constitutional law, which is something that's not really practiced in court for criminal, constitutional law, see that's how they get criminals, right. So they are violating that actual amendment because it's excessive bail abandonment, right, saying you have the right to be able to pay your bill if you do a crime. However, that's where we come in, the actual slave labor of jails, right. So in order for me to hold people in this jail and it goes all the way back to amendment 13, right, something that we did here screening- right, so we're going all the way back to this the ratify something that we should actually dismantle, constitution right, we should go in the constitution, rip it all up and start back over because all of these violations that we can't argue in court, under constitutional law, is the main issue, right. So if I get beat by the police, I can't argue that they beat me up or they planted drugs in my criminal justice hearing. I have to wait for a civil case hearing to argue that, right. So that's where we come back to the beginning, where we got to go all the way back to how something has never been dismantled and is still holding us today. And we in Fayetteville PACT, we did surveys and research and we went into our courtroom, we went into district court, we went to superior court, we went to their first hearing and we argued with several different incidents of people. There was a time we went into the courtroom and people were standing outside the court and they said they had Failure to Appear and I said, why are you guys standing outside? Oh they didn't call our name. There were people getting called that were standing out the door and they got Failure to Appear- \$150, 000 bond. I had to call our superior clerk and say, hey I got it on video that this guy's standing out here. \$150,000 and guess what he was in? Guess what he was there for? He was there for writing a check fraud, right. So we're going from a \$20,000 bond to \$150,000 because you failed to appear but you were right outside the courtroom. Of course I got, you know everybody's pissed off, DA, superior court, judges, right. So I'm like it doesn't matter the point at the end of the day, right. Why haven't we passed this across the board when we are here in Cumberland County, a tier one, so we're already below poverty, right, and all we're doing is digging ourselves deeper in poverty because we're not helping the people get out of poverty. So who are we to judge, especially when we have only a detention center here, to decide if that person is guilty? Gerard Atkinson spent 1300 days in our Cumberland County Detention Center, his bond was \$150,000, then they raised it to \$600,000 and guess what? All charges dropped. So that's what I'm saying, and he suffered from mental illness, right. So that's what I'm saying. Where are we at? And why haven't our DA's and our judges that we vote in office doing their damn job? November is coming up, and next year is coming up, so your DA has the authority and your superior court judge has the authority to do a cash bill ending. Me and Shaun have presented it to them and they don't like the conversation, okay, because we've been presented for years. Okay, and it's an easy tactic- it's an easy tactic, however, let's make sure we also- because there's things we're missing in this conversation, the attorneys, you have attorneys that first of all I don't like to sit up here and downgrade people's job, but I'm gonna fucking do it, right. Okay, you as an attorney have ethics that you're supposed to do and things you're supposed to follow to make sure your client is not being violated from their civil rights or constitutional rights- that includes when they're in jail. So you're supposed to visit them in jail, make sure that they're getting treated correctly, right. That doesn't happen. There's some

Kathy Greggs Co-Founder/ President: people that don't see their attorney until they go to court okay- then he is supposed to make sure, he or she is supposed to make sure you could pay for bail and get a bail reduction. So where's the attorneys at? So let's hold everybody accountable in this circle. You got the bail bondsman, you got the attorneys, then you have the probation, then you have the supervision- all these people are government and they're taking your money so you could police something because guess what? I'm gonna hold you in there because I want you to do something because guess what? I don't know how to do a trial, I'm an attorney I can't even, I can't even fight for you. That's how I win- I'll add that to my win- that's what's happening. So why aren't clients doing state bars against your attorney? And I tell my clients, when they come to Fayetteville PACT, talking about hey this is what happened to me, uh first thing I said is you need to file a state bar against that attorney. And we have done this, Fayetteville PACT, we have done a DA removal form with Attorney Don Blaygrove- we filed the first one to remove our DA. So that's what I'm saying, where is this stuff at? This is the stuff that we should be telling people they need to do because the pressure needs to go on these people that is holding us in slavery. We cannot sit here in bondage and not know who we need to target and who we need to hit. If you go do a DA removal in your county, guarantee you're gonna get some serious heads rolling. You do a state bar against your attorney, you're gonna get some serious heads rolling.

Miranda Jones: Well we need we need to do it because y'all I know y'all remember but our DA, Jim O'Neill, he was at the Trump rally. I watched part of it. And and uh, insurrectionist whatever it was, former president Donald Trump, he was praising Jim O'Neill, right. So like he was out there y'all, they had everybody out there, in the heart of the Black community, like they had this thing. Right and so Jim O'Neil was just kind of up there, so um one other thing keep that in mind when we think about Jim- but there are only two countries that have a bail system- that's the United States of America and the Philippines- so ask yourself- out of all these other countries, why is it that it's the USA and the Philippines? Why is that? And we're coming to a close, although this has been a dynamic discussion- there's a couple of solutions, right, that I want to leave the people with for both the ending of the cash bail system as well as the crb that we talked about. So a couple of things- first end the cash bill system. That's hands down, right? Investigate the local bail bond system, presume in a sense, like that's what we always say is our constitutional right, right? You know, currently in the middle of this pandemic, we want to stop the over usage of jail in the spread of COVID 19 and I need for our artists because I know we're going to have some people on here- understand that this actually also really impacts poor white people too, like y'all got to get that. Sometimes I think Black people are getting something we don't deserve but we do because our ancestors work for it, okay? Period. But this also really impacts poor white people please, please, please get that in your cerebellum- um save the detention center for the most serious offenses, create a risk assessment tool for judges (that's actually I think been done in some other states so there's some research around that), decrease the numbers of African Americans housed in jail- we've seen a lot of our brothers uh not get the medicine they needed and so they died, we we've seen some of them actually just be murdered, we've seen kind of this um this negligence- I've heard from my father who was in jail, I've heard from my cousin who was in jail, some of the horror stories they tell me are just absolutely astounding, right. What happens to Black men because Black men a lot of times seen

Miranda Jones: as animals, they're seen as super predators, so when these brothers go in there and they're saying, I need my asthma medicine, I need my high blood pressure medicine, my daddy said he didn't get his diabetes medicine until like four days later, okay. You can kill somebody, so let's decrease that and we really again, we need this community-based mental health treatment, uh we need these things for substance abuse, housing and so these are some of the things that we need to kind of really, really look at as potential solutions that really help our community overall, right? Like there's a lot that we can do, there's a lot that we can prevent if we start to think creatively about some of the options and think about how it's going to impact our community overall because I'm tired of every time I turn around we talk about poverty, poverty, poverty, poverty- I'm tired of the expose, you know, I'm tired of finding out you know like what happened to our Brother up there on Liberty a whole year later, like I'm tired of hearing about stuff like that. So those are just some solutions. I also want y'all to know you can donate to um Julie can you tell us, tell people where to donate to your group?

Julie Brady: Yeah um I can see if I can put the link to our paypal in the comments. But yeah, we have a paypal, you can see our website at forsythecountycbf.com, we're on facebook, we're on twitter. So yeah, I'll make sure that that link is easily accessible.

Miranda Jones: And also y'all, uh go to triadabolition.org/fcpark and sign a petition. And one thing that I want to leave you with as it relates to an effective crv, civilian police oversight committee is that the first thing that crvs must be is structured to include investigative powers including subpoena power. Subpoena power allows the crv to compel witnesses to testify and produce documents in the course of investigations. This is a very important tool. This will, you know, kind of lead people into investigating the public complaints, police misconduct, and other policing issues. Y'all, our goal as activists is to save lives. Our goal is to create a better society than one we were born into and the one that we live in. For the Black activists, I feel like I can safely say on here this is the work done to honor our ancestors. Y'all, they fought so long and so hard and so this work is really and truly for the people. Find a group, get in it, join FCPARC, wherever find yourself- commit yourself to some work to help stop some of this injustice. We thank y'all for joining us. Have a good evening.

Kathy Greggs Co-Founder/ President: Thank you for having us everybody. We appreciate it

Miranda Jones: thank you, thank you.

Kathy Greggs Co-Founder/ President: Y'all have a great evening and a blessed week. Let's get some people free.