

For Immediate release - October 19, 2020

Statement from the Maria Mandela Vismale Baltimore City Council Campaign

My opponent, Isaac Schleifer, is failing the residents of District 5 yet again. As candidate for Baltimore City Council District 5, I object to “Yitzy” Schleifer’s decision to ignore the welfare, safety, and preferences of the body of residents that he *should* be representing. Schleifer is pushing for the relocation of a vital safety resource, namely the Northwestern Baltimore Police District Headquarters, on 5721 Reisterstown Rd. He is disregarding the wishes of the community and his duties as Public Safety Chair by moving this essential facility. In 2019, “Yitzy” wrote a letter criticizing Mayor Jack Young’s advocacy of renovation over relocation regarding improvement of NW Headquarters. Recently, “Yitzy” spoke to Fox 45, reasserting his flawed position that NW Headquarters needs to be dismantled and uprooted despite the loud objections of district homeowners and neighborhood groups. In solidarity with the Community, I support updating infrastructure and reinforcing safety for all residents including those in Hilltop, Grove Park, West Arlington, Park Heights, and Mt. Washington. The recent vandalization of Northwestern speaks to the urgency of site renovation but in no way justifies site demolition.

A former criminal defense investigator, I have always worked to promote public safety and social justice across lines of religion, affiliation, race, (and zip codes). After listening to residents throughout the District, and conducting my own open-minded investigation, I can firmly assert that the location of the NW Headquarters’ is not the problem. The problem is poor allocation of funds towards the responsible upkeep of the facility. My visits to NW Headquarters revealed its need for physical and technological updating. The push to *move* the police station is an attempt to satisfy big business affiliates rather than the needs of the people; such effort is carelessly divisive. Proof: this ill-contrived proposal has sparked an ongoing protest. The *Save Our Northwestern Police District* petition has won hundreds of signatures and is gaining greater momentum every day.

I stand with all residents. **My vote is against tearing down but is FOR BUILDING UP!** Is “Yitzy” deaf to the voice of those who reside within our district who expect fair-minded representation? Does he consider the wants and needs of all, such as those residing in zip codes further from his proposed NW relocation site? Residents regularly complain to me that the protections and resources allocated for upper Park Height, for instance, are far superior to supports provided to other areas of the District. No surprise that in 2017, my opponent took 50k from former Mayor Pugh which was used to finance the purchase of Shomrim’s (a local neighborhood watch group’s) SUV, as reported by the Baltimore Sun. Then, this year, “Yitzy” voted to defund the police which resulted in a 22 million dollar-budget deduction from public safety funding. Will those funds be reinvested to help our citizens, or will the money go to projects that have little or no resident support? With the rise of racial tension, voters must reject a councilman whose bias and affiliations take precedent over constituents’ concerns and wellbeing. You see, basically, “Yitzy” plans to move the NW Headquarters to an area where its presence will be much less impactful. Crime statistics prove his plan is irrational, reckless, and negligent. It is his ineffectual leadership that must be removed, not NWH, not funding, not residents’ peace of mind. I will be elected to City Hall, and instead of dismantling, I will rebuild! #VoteVismale