

# Julie Farnam

FOR ARLINGTON COUNTY BOARD

*Our Arlington. Our Future.*



## The Importance of Gun Safety

I had the pleasure of sitting down with Paul Friedman of the Virginia-based nonprofit [Safer Country](#) recently to discuss his efforts in preventing gun violence through research, education, and advocacy by empowering the public and government to effectively implement gun safety laws to save lives. Making our community safer for my children, and for everyone in Arlington, is of the utmost importance to me.

Although some initiatives like clearing backlogs in the background check system, the fingerprinting of those wishing to buy a firearm, and restricting the production of 3D-printed firearms and other ghost guns are efforts that will need to be tackled at the state level, there

are things that we can do within our own community to curb gun violence.

Keeping the community safe means keeping illegal firearms off our streets, but it also means being responsible with the firearms we have in our homes. There are things that we can do to keep our community safe. They include following Safer Country's lead by:

- Developing an Emergency Substantial Risk Order (ESRO) awareness campaign, similar to what [Fairfax County](#) did.
- Working with private and nonprofit organizations to fund lockbox giveaways.
- Partnering with local eateries to print gun safety tips on takeout boxes.

[Twenty-percent](#) of deaths amongst youth are unintentional and of those, [firearms were involved](#) in 33% of these deaths in children aged 11–15 years, followed by 29% among those aged 0–5 years, 24% among those aged 16–17 years, and 14% among persons aged 6–10 years. Gun safety in our homes, even when the firearm is owned legally, is paramount.

When we think about gun violence, we must also not only think of it in a criminal or accidental context. The suicide rate (and I recognize suicide is still criminalized in Virginia) involving a firearm stands at [54%](#) nationally. And the suicide rate amongst veterans is [1.57 times higher than the general population](#), with about [70% of those deaths inflicted by a firearm](#). Therefore, the availability of mental health services must also be considered in conjunction with firearms safety. If you're thinking about suicide, are worried about a friend or loved one, or would like emotional support, call 988. Help is available 24/7.

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## Growth Gone Wrong

I was canvassing in the Green Valley neighborhood last weekend and I came across a new development at 2101 and 2103 S. Monroe Street. This is a newly built duplex. This is also perfectly representative of why the County's approach to housing and density is not achieving affordability or equity. In fact, as this example shows, the County's approach may actually be exacerbating inequity and unaffordability.

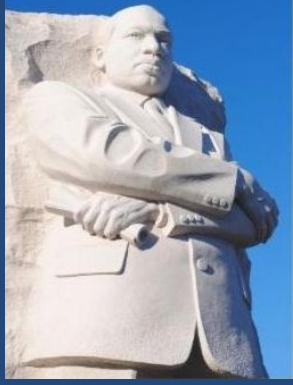
- The single-family home originally at 2101 S. Monroe was 900 sq. ft. and [sold for \\$587,637](#).
- It was torn down and replaced with a duplex, each unit approximately 3,200 sq. ft.
- The property is being [rented](#) for [\\$4700/month](#) per unit. (a price I confirmed with the rental agency)



In summary, the County's Expanded Housing Options did double the density of this lot, but it eliminated a homeownership opportunity, it created housing that is unaffordable to many people, and replaced an more-affordable home (whose mortgage would have been less than the rent is now) with housing that is a significant increase in price than what had existed prior to "expanding" the housing options.

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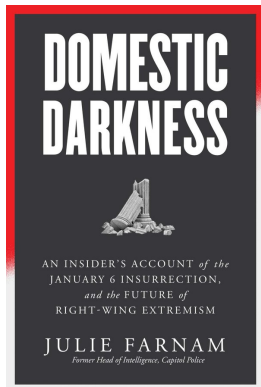
As we reflect today on the remarkable wisdom of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I'll end this newsletter with a quote of his that encapsulates what public service means to me. It's why I've dedicated my career to serving others. It's why I keep going on



days when I feel like I'm pushing a boulder up a mountain. It's why I fight for what I know to be right even when there are forces much stronger and more powerful than me in opposition.

*“Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a better person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world we live in.”*

## Upcoming Events



### Book Reading/Fundraiser January 20, 2024 at 2:00pm

Join Julie Farnam on Saturday, January 20, 2024, at 2:00pm to discuss her book **Domestic Darkness**. Proceeds for this event benefit the Julie for Arlington campaign. Address provided upon purchase of your ticket.

[Sign Up](#)



### Ireland's Four Courts January 21, 2024 at 7:00pm

Join Julie for great conversation--and maybe karaoke!--at the newly reopened Ireland's Four Courts (2051 Wilson Blvd., Arlington) on Sunday, January 21, 2024 at 7:00pm.

[Sign Up](#)



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I remain committed to helping Arlington thrive.  
Your donation makes that possible.  
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