

## COMMUNITY JUSTICE COALITION

Prince George's County, MD

SB 1029 Public Information Act - Personnel and Investigatory Records - Complaints Against Law Enforcement Officers

March 3, 2020

### Position: Support with Amendments

Community Justice Coalition supports SB 1029, a bill that would allow formal complaints of job-related misconduct of law enforcement officers to be public information, with the adoption of amendments to add provisions that protect the community and provide greater transparency.

Community Justice Coalition is a group of organizations and concerned community members who are dedicated to ensuring police accountability in Prince George's County. Our organization centers and uplifts people of color and those impacted by the criminal legal system.

For decades, the Prince George's County Police Department has continuously broken the trust of the community that has left lasting trauma in the lives of community members. A 2019 Journal of Adolescent Health study found that young people who experienced police interaction including harsh language, threats and use of force face a higher likelihood of emotional distress and posttraumatic stress symptoms than their peers.<sup>1</sup> Further, a 2018 Lancet published study found that police brutality has negative mental health impacts for people of color and can result in more poor mental health days.<sup>2</sup> Beyond the data, many of our coalition members and leaders have faced trauma at the hands of PGCPD. Our communities deserve full transparency about police misconduct to restore the harm done by law enforcement officers.

Community Justice Coalition would like to see more instances of police misconduct classified as public information and an independent process for complaints.

We would like for the legislature to **adopt the sponsor's amendments** which would allow the disclosure of:

1. Use or attempted use of force;
2. Sexual assault;
3. Dishonesty, perjury, false statements, false reports, destruction, creation, falsification or concealing evidence, directly related to the reporting, charging, investigation, or prosecution of unlawful conduct;
4. Discrimination or bias;
5. Misconduct alleged by a member of the public, or involving an interaction with a member of the public, that is directly related to the reporting, charging, investigation, or prosecution of unlawful conduct; and
6. Criminal activity by a law enforcement officer

**Additionally, we would like for the custodial charge who determines if complaint-record information is disclosable to the complainant or others shall be independent of law enforcement agencies and instead be made up of citizens similar to a jury.**

Sincerely,

Community Justice Coalition

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/10/191009075125.htm>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)33060-5/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)33060-5/fulltext)