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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0626, Law Enforcement Officers - Use of Force
2/4/2021

TO: Chair Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Ayla Hurley

Chair Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, my name is Ayla Hurley, I live in Columbia, Maryland, and I am writing to support the Law Enforcement Officers - Use of Force bill to create a “use of force” policy in our state.

Maryland is one of only nine states that does not define or provide direction regarding “use of force” by law enforcement against others, using only Supreme Court cases *Graham v. Connor* (1989) and *Tennessee v. Garner* (1985). Neither of these provide for Maryland law enforcement: (1) definitions of lethal and non-lethal force; (2) a requirement of lethal force only as a last resort after exhausting all other non-lethal methods of de-escalation; (3) guidance or regulations on specific and dangerous officer behavior, such as frequency of weapon discharges or dangerous body restrictions like chokeholds; (4) or specific regulations against excessive use of force used on Black, Indigenous, or People of Color, who are disproportionately affected by it.

In order to be held accountable for violent and unjust actions, Maryland law enforcement must have a policy that defines what is and is not acceptable behavior for our officers. I urge you to support the creation of such a policy through SB 0626.