

HB0188 No-Knock Warrants – Elimination (Duncan’s Act)

Stance: Support

Testimony: My name is Adiena Britt of the 45th District of Baltimore City. I am writing to provide testimony and lend my support for Bill HB0188 that will eliminate No Knock Warrants in the State of MD. This is a story of the events that were the result of a No-Knock Warrant.

During 2015, I was attempting to utilize law enforcement to handle a drug operation in my community. I first wrote to the Commander of the Northeast Police District, Major Worley. Our Community Association and the newsletters provided this step as guidance to residents. I received no response. After trying to figure out whom to escalate it to, I called the "Community Liaison" at the District, only to be told that I needed to speak with a Narcotics Detective; and that they "only work at night". I tried calling at night, but was told there was no one to speak to, and that I should come up to the District to file a report. I went to the District, there was a man behind a very large desk who told me there was no one I could speak to, nor file to report. When I became exacerbated, he offered to "text" any information I gave him to a detective. I dictated a text, and he showed it to me to verify the information was correct and sent it while I was standing there. A few days later, I was contacted by a Detective Parker; who claimed he would assist. He began to text me, then he came to perform an "observation" of the home the drugs were being sold out of, but then things got weird. He became inappropriate with things he was asking me in texts, and I only realized later that he was setting me up to have my home raided. To this day I don't know why.

On September 10, 2015; our lives changed forever. After returning from getting some groceries my husband said he felt uneasy. The guy dealing the drugs seemed to have disappeared, so I didn't know why. We were being followed and watched; but didn't know it. After bringing things into the house, we left the main door open, but the screen door closed. My 12-year-old son was playing in the basement, my husband was getting settled to watch the first football game of the season, and I was at my computer. Within minutes, someone rips open our screen door and a bunch of men clad in black are yelling and screaming and pointing guns at us. They NEVER stated they were police officers. They barely had any insignia on their clothing, it just appeared to be a home invasion. It took me a couple of minutes to even realize they were police officers, because they were giving us conflicting orders and cuffing my husband. They had me lie face down on the floor, only then did I notice they were police. I asked if they were kidding or if they had the wrong house. I was yelled at with expletives and told to shut up. I remembered my son in the basement, and told them there was a little kid downstairs by himself, but it was already too late.

My son heard the commotion and also thought it was a home invasion. He was panicking and trying to figure out what to do. He saw legs clad in black clothing coming down the stairs with a gun pointed over the banister as he was grabbing for the doorknob to get out into our darkened back yard. He was ironically going to call police on his phone. When the door flung open, more men dressed in black and pointing guns were on the other side of it. They had "covered" my entire property, even tearing through my garden. Four grown men in black made a 12-year-old get on his knees and put his hands on his head at the gunpoint. He is 18 now and is still receiving therapy. He still has nightmares. Had he reacted quicker, and ran into my darkened back yard, I believe they would have shot and killed him.

A copy of the warrant was left with us when they departed. The details written to "describe" my home were inaccurate. They were executing it based on a mysterious "confidential informant" that supposedly bought ONE gel cap of drugs. There were no drugs, no cutting materials, no packaging, no evidence of prior drug making activities. They ransacked my home, terrorized all of us, and we still don't know why. Since we thought it was a home invasion at first, we could have tried to defend ourselves, but would have been assaulted or murdered; right in our own home. No Knock Warrants are extremely dangerous, and are rarely utilized for anything dangerous. I do not consider drugs dangerous enough to put people's lives at risk of dying at the hands of law enforcement as they barge in, unannounced and acting in a crazed, hostile manner. Please pass this Bill for passage into Law.

Adiena C. Britt

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