

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. I am a resident of MD District **12**. I am **testifying against HB 670**.



HB 670 includes a slew of provisions that modify police policy. I am not testifying against this bill as someone who doesn't want to see police reform happen, in fact, I desperately want it. The problem with this bill is that it doesn't go far enough in a year where better police accountability alternatives are already drafted and ready for passage.

Two particular areas where this bill is insufficient are its provisions on use of force and its modifications to the Law Enforcement Officer's Bill of Rights. In its current form, provisions around limiting police officer's use of force in this bill lacks sufficient details on deescalation alternatives (opting for less-lethal force as a stand-in), don't limit options based on collateral consequences, and don't clearly define what is included and not in "deadly" force. Oversights like these provide the wiggle room that can allow unjust policing to continue.

Additionally, this bill repeals LEOBR without replacing it with a better system. It retains trial boards and creates charging committees, both of which allow for a majority of its members to have pre-existing relationships with police that would bias their decisions. These are active choices to keep the most odious parts of LEOBR. Essentially, this bill preserves the ability of police to police themselves.

While there is one positive part of this bill, the return of the Baltimore City Police Department under the control of Baltimore City government, this is not sufficient to make up for the negative in this bill, especially as BIPOC activists have been clear on what exactly Maryland needs to do to begin having an accountable police force.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to **vote against HB 670** and instead support better alternatives in House Bill 151 and House Bill 139.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Katherine Wilkins

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Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore