

Testimony for the House Judiciary Committee

February 9, 2021

HB 670 – Police Reform and Accountability Act of 2021

UNFAVORABLE

To Chairman Clippinger, Vice-Chair Atterbeary, and Committee members,

My name is Charles Smith and I live in Capitol Heights, Maryland. I'm formally submitting my written testimony in opposition to HB 670- Police Reform and Accountability Act of 2021.

I appreciate all of the work that has been done to investigate the changes needed to our statewide police policies I do not believe that this bill goes far enough to ensure the safety of all of our residents.

First, I believe that HB 139 is a better option to codify a statewide standard for use of force. The State needs a uniform Use of Force policy. HB 139 would provide that standard policy and should be reported out favorably by your committee instead.

Secondly, the full repeal and replacement of LEOBR in HB 151 is a better option for Maryland. The lack of Civilian Oversight is a critical issue in Maryland and just retaining the trial boards with a majority police membership is not civilian oversight since the civilian members would be outweighed by the police votes. Real civilian oversight would need to be external and would need to be able to have actual oversight power. Additionally, the charging committee would further limit the public transparency of the process which should instead be sent to a civilian oversight board.

We are thankful to the committee for taking such a deep look at all of these bills and ask for the committee to not support this bill but instead support HB 139, HB 151, and HB 120 all three of which would provide the significant changes needed to increase transparency, oversight, and accountability that Marylanders deserve.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Charles Smith

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