



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair  
Delegate David Moon, Vice Chair  
Judiciary Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

DATE: February 14th, 2023

RE: HB0088 Public Safety – Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission – Prohibition Against Certain Affiliation or Support by Police Officers

### **The MLLC supports HB0088 Public Safety – Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission – 3 Prohibition Against Certain Affiliation or Support by Police Officers, 2023**

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB0088.

According to the White House’s National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism, domestic terrorism is the “most urgent terrorism threat facing the United States today.”<sup>1</sup> In 2006, the Federal Bureau of Investigation performed an intelligence assessment on White Supremacist Infiltration of Law Enforcement. In their key judgements, the FBI found that although white supremacist groups have historically engaged in strategic efforts to infiltrate and recruit from law enforcement communities, current reporting on attempts to infiltrate and recruit reflect self-initiated efforts by individuals, particularly among those already within law enforcement ranks, to volunteer their professional resources to white supremacist causes with which they sympathize.<sup>2</sup> White supremacist presence among law enforcement personnel is a concern due to the access they may possess to restricted areas vulnerable to sabotage and to elected officials or protected persons, whom they could see as potential targets for violence.<sup>3</sup> In addition, white supremacist infiltration of law enforcement can result in other abuses of authority and passive tolerance of racism within communities served.<sup>4</sup> This potential for danger could expand, as the intelligence acquired through the successful infiltration of law enforcement by one white supremacist group can benefit other groups due to the multiple allegiances white supremacists typically hold.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The United States Government. (2021, June 15). *Fact Sheet: National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism*. The White House.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/15/fact-sheet-national-strategy-for-countering-domestic-terrorism/>.

<sup>2</sup> Counterterrorism Division, & FBI Counterterrorism Division, (U) White Supremacist Infiltration of Law Enforcement (2006). <https://www.justsecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Jan-6-Clearinghouse-FBI-Intelligence-Assessment-White-Supremacist-Infiltration-of-Law-Enforcement-Oct-17-2006-UNREDACTED.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

The origin of police officers in the South has historical similarities to, and were as feared as, white supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan, as the Texas Rangers burned peasant villages and slaughtered innocent Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the early 1900s.<sup>6</sup> The Texas Rangers today are a division of the state's Department of Public Safety, while some former Rangers joined Border Patrol when it was formed in the 1920s.<sup>7</sup> While the specific agencies may have changed over time, racist attitudes and actions in law enforcement have persisted.<sup>8</sup> On the west coast, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) has for decades faced allegations that it is home to "deputy gangs" of white officers who work in primarily Black and Latino neighborhoods, to the point where a federal judge described one such group as "a neo-Nazi, white-supremacist gang" and said higher-ups in the department "tacitly authorize deputies' unconstitutional behavior."<sup>9</sup> California is one of the number of states that have proposed new laws to give law enforcement agencies more power to exclude officers with ties to extremism.<sup>10</sup> The state recently passed the CLEAR Act, the California Law Enforcement Accountability Reform Act, which requires law enforcement agencies to screen applicants for ties to hate groups and make it easier to fire anyone with such connections.<sup>11</sup> In Virginia, two police officers were arrested and charged with violent entry and disorderly conduct when invading the capitol on January 6th, 2021.<sup>12</sup> Police officers with extremist ideologies that are harmful to Latinos and other people of color are spread throughout the country, even in states bordering Maryland. Nationally, 910 Hispanics are reported to have been killed at the hands of police since 2015.<sup>13</sup>

Bills similar to the CLEAR Act could save the lives of hundreds in the Latino community in Maryland. This bill requires the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to prohibit police officers from affiliating with, supporting, or advocating for White supremacist groups, ideologies, or causes or participating in or actively promoting a certain extremist group.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0088.

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<sup>6</sup> Macfarquhar, N. (2021, May 11). *Efforts to weed out extremists in law enforcement meet resistance*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/11/us/police-extremists-state-laws.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> del Castillo, A. (2022, October 1). *New CA law requires additional police screening for ties to hate groups*. ABC7 San Francisco. <https://abc7news.com/clear-act-police-audit-biased-behavior-screening/12284169/>.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Beer, T. (2021, June 29). *Here are the police officers and other public employees arrested in connection to Capitol Riot*. Forbes.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/tommybeer/2021/01/18/here-are-the-police-officers-and-other-public-employees-arrested-in-connection-to-capitol-riot/?sh=19bbef1d3c45>.

<sup>13</sup> Macfarquhar, *Efforts to weed out*.