

Dear **Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety and Jobs. I am a resident of 12A. **I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 894.**



Showing Up for Racial Justice

I am here today to express my strong support for HB732, which would grant Baltimore City the authority to oversee and govern its own police department.

Unfortunately, under the current system, the police department is managed by the state of Maryland, creating a disconnect between those who enforce the law and those who live under it. Without the authority to oversee and govern the police department, accountability remains elusive. Residents have demanded transparency and accountability from those who enforce the law, and local control is the key to ensuring that their voices are heard and their concerns are addressed.

Decisions about policing in Baltimore City should be made by those who understand the community's dynamics and are directly accountable to its residents.

Local control empowers residents to swiftly implement tailored strategies to combat crime, improve community relations, and foster trust in law enforcement. This lack of local control means that critical decisions about policing in the city are being made by people who don't know Baltimore and, quite frankly, don't care about Baltimore. Their decisions are driven by broader state-level considerations rather than the specific needs and concerns of their neighborhoods.

This legislation represents the final and urgent step towards securing the autonomy necessary for Baltimore City to effectively govern its own police department. It's time to put the power back where it belongs—in the hands of those who know and care about Baltimore. Supporting SB894 is not just about completing a process—it's about residents reclaiming their voice, their safety, and their future.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 894.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Erica Palmisano
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Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore