



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(301) 952-3700
County Council

POSITION STATEMENT

SB 36

Senator Benson

Maryland Deaths in Custody Oversight Board

POSITION

FAVORABLE

This bill creates a Custody Oversight Board to make findings and recommendations related to deaths of incarcerated individuals and requires the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to provide information to the Board.

Prince George's County Council strongly supports this bill.

The County Council supports this bill because it addresses the crisis of deaths occurring in custody. In Maryland alone, from **January 2009 to March 2023, approximately 885 individuals lost their lives within the Department of Corrections.** Many of these tragic incidents resulted from the unnecessary use of force and neglect within the criminal legal system. We want Maryland to possess accurate data on the annual number of deaths in custody and the causes. The absence of clear, accessible information hampers the ability of policymakers, researchers, and advocates to instigate meaningful changes aimed at reducing preventable in-custody deaths. We want Maryland to set a precedent by demonstrating a commitment to transparency and accountability, with the goal of reducing in-custody deaths through improved adherence to established procedures and policies.

For the foregoing reasons, Prince George's County Council and respectfully requests the Committee's favorable consideration of the legislation.

Prepared by: Barnes International on behalf of Prince George's County Council.

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