

Dear **Members of the Judiciary 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 District 46, a City district covering the Southeast.

Despite thinking and hoping this was already taken care of when the City residents cast their referendum votes well over a year ago, I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 894.



Showing Up for Racial Justice

I am here today to express my strong support for SB894, which would grant Baltimore City the authority to finally oversee and govern its own police department.

Unfortunately, under the current system, our 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 our police department, accountability remains elusive. We demand transparency and accountability from those who enforce the law, and local control is the key to ensuring that our voices are heard and our concerns are addressed.

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

Local control empowers us 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 our 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 our 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 reclaiming our voice, our safety, and our 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,

John Ford

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Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore