



# NAACP

*Maryland*  
STATE CONFERENCE

February 27, 2024

Judiciary  
Maryland General Assembly  
Annapolis, Maryland

Re: HB 533 – Investigation of Complaints of Police Misconduct

Members of the Committee,

I write to you today on behalf of the Maryland NAACP in support of House Bill 533. This bill, which seeks to empower local governing bodies, including Baltimore City, to authorize police accountability boards with investigatory and subpoena powers, represents a critical step forward in our ongoing efforts to address systemic injustices within law enforcement and safeguard the rights and dignity of all Marylanders.

The historical impact of police misconduct on Black communities cannot be understated. For generations, communities of color have borne the brunt of systemic racism and discrimination within our criminal justice system. Too often, incidents of police brutality and misconduct have resulted in the loss of innocent lives, shattered families, and deepened mistrust between law enforcement and the communities they are sworn to serve and protect.

The passage of Chapter 59 of 2021 marked a significant milestone in our state's journey toward accountability and transparency in policing. By repealing the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights and establishing a statewide accountability and discipline process for police officers, Maryland took a crucial step forward in ensuring that instances of police misconduct are met with the swift and appropriate response they deserve.

House Bill 533 builds upon this foundation by authorizing the creation of police accountability boards endowed with investigatory and subpoena powers. These boards will serve as vital mechanisms for community oversight, ensuring that allegations of police misconduct are thoroughly and impartially investigated. By involving civilian members and reflecting the racial, gender, and cultural diversity of our communities, these boards will help restore trust and accountability in law enforcement.

Furthermore, administrative charging committees, will have the tools needed to provide a fair and transparent process for reviewing complaints and recommending disciplinary actions. By adhering to rigorous training standards and upholding principles of due process, these committees will help ensure that officers accused of misconduct are held accountable for their actions.

In conclusion, House Bill 533 represents a critical opportunity to uphold the principles of accountability and transparency. By empowering police accountability boards and strengthening disciplinary processes, we can begin to rebuild trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report for House Bill 533 to take a decisive step toward a more just and equitable future for all Marylanders. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

In Service,

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