



RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT NOTE

DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
MARYLAND ▪ GENERAL ▪ ASSEMBLY

2026 Session
HB0835

Criminal Procedure - No-Knock Search Warrants

Bill Summary

This bill repeals the authority to issue and execute a no-knock search warrant and alters procedures for the issuance and execution of a search warrant. The bill (1) establishes that a search warrant may not authorize a law enforcement officer executing the warrant to enter a building, apartment, premises, or place to be searched without first announcing the officer's purpose and authority; (2) specifies that a search warrant may be executed only between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.; and (3) requires an officer executing a search warrant to, prior to entering the building, apartment, premises, or place to be searched under the warrant's authority, give notice reasonably calculated to alert any occupants within the location of the officer's authority and purpose.

Racial Equity Impact Statement

There is not sufficient demographic data currently available regarding executed no-knock search warrants that would allow for an equity assessment of the bill's impacts on racial and ethnic groups in Maryland. According to data collected from law enforcement agencies by the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCPP), there were 41 no-knock warrants in the State in 2024, compared to 59 no-knock warrants in 2023. This limited data, however, is not sufficient to assess if no-knock warrants are disproportionately authorized for individuals of color. Detailed demographics of the subjects apprehended and others arrested during no-knock warrants would allow for a more detailed equity analysis of how a ban on these warrants would affect various racial and ethnic groups in the State.

Analysis

Under current law, a law enforcement officer may request, in an application for a search warrant, that a building, apartment, premises, place, or thing be searched without the officer having to

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provide notice of the officer's authority or purpose. To justify the request for such a warrant (also referred to as a no-knock warrant), the officer must have a reasonable suspicion that, without the authorization, the life or safety of the executing officer or another person may be in danger. An application for a no-knock search warrant must contain specified information and must be approved in writing by a police supervisor and the State's Attorney. If the warrant application justifies this request on these grounds, the search warrant must authorize the executing law enforcement officer to engage in these actions. A no-knock search warrant must be executed between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., absent exigent circumstances.

In addition to repealing the authority to issue and execute a no-knock search warrant, the bill restricts the time period that search warrants can be executed to between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. and requires that law enforcement officers conducting any search warrant first give notice that is reasonably calculated to alert any occupants inside the location to be searched of the law enforcement officer's authority and purpose.

State Data on No-knock Warrants

Chapters 542 and 543 of 2009 required law enforcement agencies that maintain a SWAT team to report specified information regarding executed no-knock search warrants to GOCPP. The Acts required general deployment information such as the purpose (search warrant, barricade, arrest warrant, etc.), date, time, and location of the deployment. These provisions expired on June 30, 2014. Chapter 59 of 2021 restored the data collection and reporting of SWAT team activities in which law enforcement agencies must biannually submit information to GOCPP by January 15 and July 15 of each year.

Chapter 62 of 2021 enacted comprehensive police reform, including provisions limiting the grounds for issuing a no-knock warrant. In regard to data collection, Chapter 62 requires a law enforcement agency to report to GOCPP specified data relating to search warrants executed by the agency during the prior calendar year. A law enforcement agency must compile the specified data for each one-year period as a report in a specified format. By September 1 of each year, GOCPP must (1) submit a report of the analyses and summaries of the submitted information to the Governor, each law enforcement agency, and the General Assembly and (2) publish the report on its website. Chapter 62 does not require any data collection regarding the race or ethnicity of the arrestees, officers, or owners of any property confiscated. Law enforcement agencies must report the zip code where the warrant was executed.

Despite statutory reporting requirements for search warrants, there is no reporting requirement for no-knock search warrant activity that includes demographic information. Montgomery County's Office of Legislative Oversight reported that in 2023, of the 53 persons present during Montgomery County Police Department no-knock warrant searches in 2023, all but one were Black or Hispanic. While this report includes demographic data, its limited scope is insufficient to reliably infer statewide trends. In addition, the small number of executed no-knock search warrants in the State limits the scope of any disproportionate impacts.

Of the 41 no-knock search warrants executed in Maryland in 2024, there were 30 arrests. **Exhibit 1** shows the breakdown of the 41 warrants by jurisdiction. Baltimore and Montgomery counties accounted for 56% of all no-knock search warrants in 2024.

Exhibit 1
Executed No-knock Search Warrants in Maryland
2024

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Warrants</u>
Montgomery	14
Baltimore	9
Charles	7
Baltimore City	4
Harford	2
Howard	2
Prince George's	2
Anne Arundel	1
Total	41

Source: Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy

Data and Legislation from Other Jurisdictions

Concerns regarding no-knock warrants focus on various issues, including officer and civilian safety, mistaken identity, inaccurate information, and insufficient judicial scrutiny. In addition, there is a growing body of data detailing the disproportionate impacts of the criminal justice system on people of color, including disparities in arrests and drug sentencing. Several high-profile events involving no-knock search warrants and the deaths of individuals who were present at the locations targeted by the warrants suggest that there are disparities in how these warrants are authorized, executed, and assessed.

The Minneapolis Civil Rights Department's Office of Police Conduct Review conducted a preliminary analysis of the Minneapolis Police Department's service of no-knock search warrants between September 1, 2021, and January 31, 2022. The office found that 74% of no-knock warrants were served on Black individuals, who comprised 18% of the city's population according to the 2020 census. The office's investigation was prompted by the fatal shooting of Amir Locke by Minneapolis police officers serving a search warrant in a downtown apartment building on February 2, 2022. Locke, a 22-year-old Black man, was not the subject of the search warrant.

Since 2021, at least six states have banned no-knock warrants: Connecticut, Florida, Oregon, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington. In addition, Maine, Nevada, and Utah have instituted limits on the availability of no-knock search warrants to law enforcement by requiring that they only be used in exigent circumstances.

Conclusion

Based on anecdotal evidence from other states and local jurisdictions, the bill's prohibition on no-knock search warrants could have a positive impact on Black individuals based on their general

overrepresentation in the criminal justice system. However, there is no way to directly measure the impacts without demographic data associated with no-knock search targets and arrestees in previous years and going forward. The GOCPP report summarizing no-knock warrant activity by jurisdiction, while providing useful information, is not sufficient for an equity assessment of possible racial or ethnic disparities in the issuance of no-knock search warrants in Maryland.

Information Sources: Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy; Minneapolis Civil Rights Department; Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight; Department of Legislative Services

Analysis by: Rafael Regales

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Appendix – Maryland Demographics

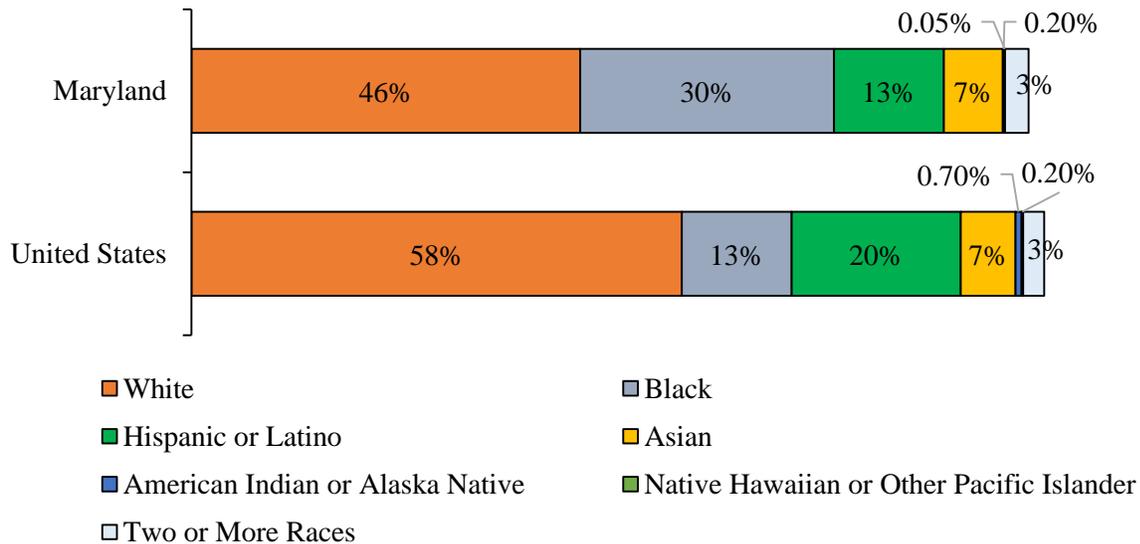
Race and Ethnicity of the Maryland Population

Maryland’s 2020 census population is 6,177,244, a 7% increase from the 2010 census count and approximately 2% higher than the 2019 census population estimates. Maryland remains one of the most racially and ethnically diverse states in the nation and is ranked as the fourth most diverse state by the U.S. Census Bureau’s [Diversity Index](#). While no single racial or ethnic group constitutes a majority, racial minorities as a group constitute a majority of the State’s population. This diversity underpins the analytical framework used in racial equity impact notes (REIN), which seek to identify potential disparities that may be exacerbated or created by proposed criminal justice legislation.

Methodology Update

Beginning in 2025, REIN will use annual population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Population Estimates Program (PEP) as the basis for disparity and disproportionality calculations. This methodological update reflects best practices in demographic analysis, as PEP data incorporate births, deaths, and migration to provide the most current population counts between censuses. Although the estimates are more temporally responsive, they do not materially change the proportionate racial and ethnic breakdown observed in the 2020 census. Instead, they conservatively reflect population changes since 2020 while preserving the overall demographic composition of the State.

**U.S. and Maryland Population by Race and Ethnicity
2024 Population Estimates**



Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau