



Brandon M. Scott
President
Baltimore City Council

100 Holliday Street, Suite 400 · Baltimore, Maryland 21202
410-396-4804 · Fax: 410-539-0647
e-mail: councilpresident@baltimorecity.gov

SB 1029

March 3, 2020

TO: The Honorable Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: The Honorable Brandon M. Scott, President of the Baltimore City Council

RE: SENATE BILL 1029 – Public Information Act – Personnel and Investigatory Records – Complaints Against Law Enforcement Officers

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

I write to you in **support** of Senate Bill 1029 with the sponsor's amendments. With amendments, this bill will allow the disclosure of disciplinary records pertaining to a formal complaint of misconduct.

During my entire career as a public official, I have been advocating for increased transparency and accountability around police misconduct. This bill, with the sponsor's amendments, is a major step forward for reform. The amendments to this bill are necessary to ensure that true reform is enacted that covers all investigations into police misconduct. It is important to show that we are fully committed to true transparency and accountability.

I strongly believe that the public has a right to know whether their complaints of police misconduct are being adequately investigated by the police department. In addition, making these records available helps facilitate equity and equality, making sure that all communities have their complaints investigated the same way. This transparency allows the public to know that all complaints, regardless of race, gender, disability or socioeconomic status of the complainant are taken seriously and correspondingly, that all officers are held to the same level of accountability.

Unfortunately, in Baltimore City, we have seen time and time again the need for independent police oversight. One frustration that the community has voiced is that when they do report police misconduct, they have no way of determining if an investigation was carried out and what consequence was given to the officer. It is impossible to hold the police to account if the public can never know the results of a misconduct investigation. This bill works to give communities the tools they need to hold police departments accountable. It is critical that communities have real opportunities for oversight, which this bill helps provide.

Here in Baltimore City, our police department is working to rebuild trust with the community. The type of transparency created in this bill is vital to restoring trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

As this bill works to ensure transparency, accountability and rebuild trust, I urge you to move for a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 1029 with the sponsor's amendments.