

TO: Hon. Senator William C. Smith, Jr. and the Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Melissa Badeker, Maryland resident (melissabadeker@gmail.com; 443-977-7596)
DATE: March 3, 2020

Dear Honorable William C. Smith, Jr. and Members of the Committee,

As a Maryland resident and member of SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice) Baltimore, I support SB1029 with the sponsor amendments. Under current law, individuals who file complaints of police misconduct are unable to learn how the department handles the complaint. This bill, with the sponsor amendments, would right the wrong of the current law by letting the public know whether the police department is adequately investigating their complaints of police misconduct. All who have had their rights violated by police officers, regardless of the type of complaint, have the right to have their complaint handled with due diligence.

I have a personal connection to this issue through a friend who experienced physical and emotional abuse at the hands of a police officer. A police officer pulled over her vehicle with her teenaged daughter in the passenger seat, and when she asked why she was being pulled over, the police officer violently pulled her out of the vehicle onto the ground and handcuffed her. The officer continuously refused to identify why my friend was being arrested and her daughter detained. They were eventually released without being charged. My friend filed a complaint against the officer, and almost a year passed before she was informed that the officer's actions were found to be justified. Both my friend and her daughter were extremely traumatized continue to live in fear that they will encounter the police officer again.

This is why I encourage the committee to amend HB1221 to allow (not mandate) disclosure of:

1. Use or attempted use of force;
2. Sexual assault;
3. Dishonesty, perjury, false statements, false reports, destruction, creation, falsification or concealing evidence, directly related to the reporting, charging, investigation, or prosecution of unlawful conduct;
4. Discrimination or bias;
5. Misconduct alleged by a member of the public, or involving an interaction with a member of the public, that is directly related to the reporting, charging, investigation, or prosecution of unlawful conduct; and
6. Criminal activity by a law enforcement officer

Communities especially need to know about complaints that are unsustained, when police departments conduct slow, weak, or biased investigations (or no investigation at all) and thereby find abusive officers innocent of wrongdoing. For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on SB 1029, with the sponsor amendments.

Sincerely,
Melissa Badeker