

BILL NO: SB 627
TITLE: LEOBR Repeal
COMMITTEE: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
HEARING DATE: February 4th 2021
POSITION: SUPPORT

To the Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstrieher and Esteemed Members of the Committee:

I am someone who has never had to worry about encounters with law enforcement because of my innate privilege. However, I recognize that this feeling is in contrast to the inequality which exists in our state.

While I support all five of ACLU's policing priorities (<https://www.aclu-md.org/en/campaigns/now-time-impactful-police-reforms-maryland>), I want to focus on LEOBR because now is the time to repeal it with HB151.

Giving special rights to police officers is incongruent with fairness, as is the lack of openness and transparency (see checkthepolice.org). Police with stronger protections are associated with greater harm to the communities they "protect" relative to police with fewer protections. Additionally, the LEOBR prevents communities from investigating misconduct that could lead to discipline (Keenen & Walker, 2004). As a result, only a very small percentage of complaints actually result in discipline.

It doesn't have to be this way. Maryland is in the minority as a state that still has this regressive law and you can remedy this problem with SB 627.

Thank you for your leadership,
Kevin Himberger