



TESTIMONY FOR SB0600
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL – INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF
DEATHS CAUSED BY POLICE OFFICERS

Bill Sponsor: Senator Smith

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0600 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members believe in accountability for police officers when use of force kills a member of the public. In these extreme cases, it is critically important for the family of the deceased and the public to feel that the case is being taken seriously and that justice is being served.

This bill would require a law enforcement agency to immediately notify the Office of the Attorney General of an alleged or potential incident involving a police officer where a member of the public has died. It would also require the Office of the Attorney General to investigate and to send the results of the investigation to the State's Attorney with jurisdiction over the incident within 15 days of the completion of the investigation. If the results of the investigation warrant prosecution, the Office of the Attorney General would make that recommendation.

If the State's Attorney then declines to prosecute or does not inform the Office of the Attorney General within 45 days of their intent to prosecute, the Office of the Attorney General will prosecute.

This is an important step. The family of the deceased needs to understand that the incident is being taken seriously and is quickly investigated. More importantly, if the State's Attorney declines to prosecute after an unambiguous determination from the Office of the Attorney General, the family of the deceased will have confidence that the officer will be prosecuted.

This will provide the level of transparency and accountability required for such as disastrous and heart wrenching outcome.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.