



Testimony on SB786
Baltimore City – Control of the Police Department of Baltimore City
Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Mr. Chair and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

My name is Ricarra Jones, and I am the Political Director with 1199SEIU- the largest healthcare union in the nation, where we represent over 10,000 healthcare workers in Maryland. Given the need to allow the Baltimore City Department to better manage the community and its residents without third -party control, we support HB204- Health Care Facilities – Assisted Living Programs – Memory Care and Alzheimer’s Disease Unit Regulations.

Since the BPD is currently a state agency, the Baltimore’s City Council cannot implement policy changes that influence policing. This causes internal and external strife for the City due to the fact that immediate and long-standing policies and trends, aren’t able to be acted upon given the lack of authority of the BPD. In example, if a large-scale emergency were to break out such as past riots in Baltimore City, the BPD would have to wait for clearance and permission from the State to effectively due their jobs.

For 1199SEIU members, many of whom who work in Baltimore City, this legislation is of great importance. Not only do our members work in Baltimore City, but they are also residents. For this fact, our members like to know that they are being policed with standards and procedures that reflect the input and needs of the community they live in- not the needs of an outside entity. In practice, passing this legislation would ensure that residents are able to build a better rapport with the police department and thus, build more trust between residents and police officers.

For this reason, we believe that this Act will create the necessary structure in place to improve overall policing of Baltimore City residents, and improve the practices that police officers can take given their personal experiences and report with the community. For this reason, we are supportive of SB 786, which sets a path for giving Baltimore the same degree of control over its police as other Marylanders.

Respectfully,
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