



SBo864 -- Oppose

Public Safety - Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism

Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Takoma Park Mobilization opposes SBo864, Public Safety - Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism.

Takoma Park Mobilization is a grassroots advocacy organization with a network of over 2,500 Marylanders. We work to enact local, state, and national policies and laws that ensure equal justice for all, with special attention to the treatment of people of color, immigrants, and other vulnerable individuals in our communities.

Our own Maryland experience suggests that if SBo864 is enacted, the effort may be mistargeted. I quote a 2008 article (<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2008-dec-07-na-cop-spy7-story.html>): *“Maryland officials now concede that, based on information gathered by “Lucy” and others, state police wrongly listed at least 53 Americans as terrorists in a criminal intelligence database -- and shared some information about them with half a dozen state and federal agencies, including the National Security Agency.”* Those surveilled included then-Maryland Senator Jamie Raskin, guilty only of meeting with constituents whom the Maryland State Police deemed suspect.

And SBo864 is alarming, with optics that recognize the chilling implications for Maryland immigrants and people of color. The bill devotes five Whereas clauses to insisting that it seeks “to promote inclusiveness, celebrate diversity, work to ensure equitable opportunities... and reject hate and bias.” Why did sponsors include this protestation? Because they understand that efforts of this sort most often target marginalized and dissenting neighbors rather than white supremacists. For instance, I’d bet you anti-immigrant elements would seek to add MS-13 to the Task Force agenda.

Just days ago, Senate President Bill Ferguson called a peaceful protest by policing reform advocates an act of ‘intimidation.’ Carlean Ponder stated on behalf of the Silver Spring Justice Coalition and the Montgomery County Defund Policing & Invest in Communities Coalition, *“With his choice of words, Sen. Ferguson has aligned himself with those who seek to vilify protests on behalf of Black lives... Sen. Ferguson’s attack on free speech on the Maryland Senate Floor is significant because of the nation’s history of using law enforcement to arrest, beat, and even kill civil rights protestors.”*

Further, **SBo864 is unneeded, premised on issues encountered elsewhere** -- in Michigan, where heavily-armed white-supremacist militias run rampant, and at the U.S. Capitol -- without providing evidence of a need here in Maryland. It is redundant, adding nothing to the current toolkit for countering domestic terrorism.

Finally, **the Task Force mandate directed by SBo864 is problematic.** What “practices for... countering domestic terrorism” could there be other than more police and more- militarized police? The direction to provide “oversight measures” is incredibly non-specific. Oversight by whom and of what? And I have a hard time getting my head around the State of Maryland's finding "ways to

counter and prosecute online extremism," given how borderless the online world is and how difficult it is to regulate what happens on online platforms.

SBo864 is redundant, unneeded, liable to mistargeting, and chilling and the Task Force directive is problematic. Takoma Park Mobilization urges the Judicial Proceedings Committee to reject SBo864.

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