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District 40

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0627 - Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights - Repeal  
and Procedures for Discipline  
February 3, 2021  
TO: Chair Smith  
FROM: Chelsea Gray

Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, my name is Chelsea Gray. I live in Baltimore City, Maryland, and I am writing to support SB0627 - Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights - Repeal and Procedures for Discipline.

Repealing the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights is the first step of many reforms needed to address the damaged relationship between the population of Maryland and the police officers who are meant to protect and serve them. Most states in the country do not have similar LEOBR laws, and the special rights afforded to officers go far beyond the standard in other places. The limits placed on the potential for discipline against officers who abuse their power only perpetuates the cycle of police brutality faced disproportionately by Black Marylanders. The inability to hold police officers accountable for their misconduct has been evidenced in a recent report by the ACLU of Maryland that detailed complaints against 1,800 officers in the Baltimore Police Department, many whom are still on the force and will most certainly continue to receive complaints. These complaints made by citizens of Maryland deserve to be heard and addressed, and police officers who abuse their power, break the law, and damage peoples' lives, deserve to be held accountable. The Baltimore Police Department has been under state control for 150 years, and has been under a federal consent decree since the death of Freddie Gray in 2015. When will we begin making the reforms that might actually result in change?

I urge you to support SB0627 to help ensure that Maryland's law enforcement is being held accountable to the public.