

February 11, 2021

Samantha Blau
Baltimore, MD 21224

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS OF SB786/HB1027

Baltimore City – Control of the Police Department of Baltimore City

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Samantha Blau

My name is Samantha Blau and I am a resident of Baltimore City in the 46th district. I write to you to ask for your **support of SB786/HB1027, Baltimore City - Control of the Police Department of Baltimore City with amendments** to shorten the implementation timeline to 2023 and include community members in the Advisory Board.

Since moving to Baltimore in 2011, since starting work in Baltimore in 2009, local control of the Baltimore City Police department has been an issue that those around me, neighbors and co-workers have discussed as a priority. I would imagine that since 1860 residents of the city have been looking forward to a return of their police department to their own local government. In 1915 Mayor Preston expressed a desire to wrest control of his City's police department from state control. In my volunteer work I know that I have met with representatives from the Baltimore City delegation on this issue more than once, not to mention discussing it with my own representatives. This is an issue whose time came long ago and is disturbingly only recently being taken seriously.

In the vein of the mismanagement of this issue, I am disappointed that the bill presented this session lacks some fundamental components. I hope that this bill can be given amendments in order to bolster its ability to be of use to the community. **I support the addition of community members to the proposed advisory board.** If the power of this bill is to hinge on the execution of a ballot initiative I would like to see that guaranteed and not merely suggested. I believe that **the ballot initiative should take place as soon as possible (the 2022 election) and not delay this act of justice to 2024.**

I respectfully urge this committee to give a favorable report, with amendments, on SB786/HB1027.