



SB419- Support

January 28, 2021

Senator Will Smith
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support for Senate Bill 419 – No-Knock Warrants - Elimination

Dear Chairman Smith and Committee Members:

As the State's Attorney for Baltimore City, I stand in strong support of Senate Bill 419, which repeals a provision of law authorizing an application for a search warrant to consent a request authorizing the executing law enforcement officer to enter a building, apartment, premises, place, or thing to be searched without giving notice of the officer's authority or purpose under certain circumstances.

Late last year, I instructed my Assistant State's Attorney's to no longer authorize "no knock" warrants. Recent events, such as the tragic killing of Breonna Taylor, have shown that the ends do not justify the means. Seventeen states do not allow this tactic, and our office ceased the participation of this dangerous measure.

The increased use of this tactic was a product of the failed "war on drugs," a series of failed federal and local police practices aimed at "warring" against drug use. Data collected in a study conducted by Peter Kraska revealed that "no knock" warrants were used about one thousand-five hundred times in the 1980s, rising to roughly forty thousand per year by the year 2000. By 2010, sixty thousand to seventy thousand "no knock" warrants were being used annually across the nation. The majority of these raids were searching for marijuana.¹ Further, a 2014 report on policing conducted by the ACLU found that sixty-two% of "no knock" entries were drug searches, and that drugs were reportedly found in only thirty-five% of entries.²

In the interest of reforming Maryland's policing practices to ensure increased safety and protection of our communities, I urge you to consider a favorable report for Senate Bill 419.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marilyn J. Mosby".

Marilyn J. Mosby
State's Attorney for Baltimore City

¹ <https://cjmasters.eku.edu/sites/cjmasters.eku.edu/files/21stmilitarization.pdf>

² <https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/assets/jus14-warcomeshome-report-web-rel1.pdf>