

I support SB0266 - Set Statutory Limits on Police Use of Force - Judicial Proceedings - Sen. Carter

I have witnessed an event where a police officer may have used excessive force. While the police officer was trying to help the person, his use of excessive force might have done the opposite had we not intervened. Additionally, I and most Americans have seen in the last few years repeated displays of excessive use of force that have resulted in the deaths of many people of color. I don't want that for my County, State, or Country. That is not the America I want to live in.

Because Maryland is one of the few states without statutory language limiting police use of force, Maryland's police are only regulated by federal and local law. This means of all places, by law Maryland police have the most freedom to brutalize its citizens with impunity of any state. I do not sleep well knowing this, aware that my friends, family, and neighbors are not being adequately protected when they come into contact with a police person.

A meaningful police use of force statute would need to 1) make use of force acceptable only when "necessary" (rather than when "reasonable" as federal law states); 2) ban certain holds; 3) define "use of force" and delineate alternative actions; 4) limit on when officers can claim self-defense if their behavior incited the necessity to use force; 5) duty to de-escalate and to intervene with fellow officers.; and 6) require police departments to enact policies to limit use of force against certain vulnerable people, including those who have mental/behavioral impairments and those who speak limited English.

Having this law on the State's books would provide more protection of our citizens and help prevent excessive use of force that can unnecessarily harm our citizens. Please consider passing this bill so that it becomes law.

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