

I support HB0139 Law Enforcement Officers - Use of Force - Delegate Davis, D. -
Judiciary Committee

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.

I am glad that this bill defines use of lethal and non-lethal force and specifies that lethal force is not to be used until all other avenues have been exhausted and that, if used, it must stop as soon as the person is under police control and not a danger to anyone. And that there are consequences for this law not being adopted by law enforcement agencies, such as loss of funding, and consequences for police who do not abide by the law, such as manslaughter or murder charges, if someone dies.

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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