

Bill Number: HB 956
Scott D. Shellenberger, State's Attorney for Baltimore County
Opposed

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF SCOTT D. SHELLENBERGER,
STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY,
IN OPPOSITION TO HOUSE BILL 956
LAW ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES – USE OF FORCE

I write in opposition to House Bill 956 that attempts to legislate that split second decision police officers have to make every day when deciding whether and what force to use. Police are trained at the beginning of their careers and throughout their careers about the proper use of force. The training is extensive. To try to legislate these split second decisions is untenable and dangerous.

As an officer confronts danger how long do they take to go through the eight de-escalation factors in the statute.

The bill also limits when force can be used. It states that force can be used to effectuate an arrest, prevent escape, and obtain compliance with a lawful order attempts to limit the number of times when force can be used. There are too many to name. Does this section cover stepping between two people ready to fight and pushing them apart?

All of House Bill 956 is covered by case law and the training of officers. You cannot legislate split second decisions.

I urge an unfavorable report.