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Judiciary Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 18, 2021

The Honorable Delegate Luke Clippinger  
Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee  
6 Bladen Street, Room 101  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Good Afternoon, Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary and members of this wonderful committee. I am Delegate Williams and I am testifying in favor of House Bill 411, also known as the Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition of Sexual Activity.

I introduced this bill last session and I am reintroducing it this session because I feel it is important to ensure that we protect our vulnerable populations. This bill passed the House of Delegates unanimously but because of the truncated session, did not pass the Senate. After the incident of a 6-year veteran of the Prince George's County Police force an undocumented Latina woman into engaging in a sexual act in exchange for evading a ticket or arrest, I have been working hard to make sure that this unfortunate situation can no longer happen. However, even during our legislative session last year, in the town of Fairmount Heights a police officer made a demand of a woman after taking her into police custody at the local police station. There is no such thing as consent when there is an evident imbalance of power.

In 2010 a study by the libertarian think-tank, the Cato Institute found that sexual misconduct by law enforcement generates more citizen complaints than anything else except for excessive force.

In Maryland, we hold our law enforcement officers to a high standard. There are fine, honorable officers in Prince George's County and all across the state of Maryland.

However, these heinous incidents are not isolated and this type of behavior should not be tolerated in the state of Maryland. When a police officer engages in this type of action it completely deteriorates the public's confidence in our law enforcement institutions. In this current political climate, we cannot stand idly by and allow the public's trust in our police force to further deteriorate.

We want all of our residents, including our most vulnerable residents in our community to trust that the police will protect them. Before introducing this bill last session, I reached out to the State FOP and the MD Chiefs and Sheriff's Association for their input because I know that they do not support officers engaging in such acts and they want to make sure that their officers are operating with the highest integrity.

If this bill becomes law, hopefully we can restore the public's faith in our law enforcement agencies.

I urge the committee to again support this legislation and to pass House Bill 411.

Sincerely,

*Nicole A. Williams, Esq.*

Delegate Nicole A. Williams, Esq.