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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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Testimony in Support of HB 953 - Law Enforcement Racial Equity Coordinators and Audits

HB953 creates the position of Racial Equity Coordinator for every law enforcement agency in the State of Maryland that has an annual budget of over \$50 million. As amended, this bill requires the Coordinator to conduct a racial equity audit of the Department's practices on hiring, internal discipline practices, use of force, traffic stops, arrest data, and training.

The Racial Equity Coordinator will be responsible for analyzing and reviewing current practices utilizing industry standardized racial and gender equity tools, and will have the authority to review all police data, however, they cannot share any officer's personal data publicly.

Under the bill, the Coordinator will:

- Possess a deep understanding and developed practices of how to confront and deconstruct anti-Blackness;
- Have experience working across a variety of multicultural, multilingual, and immigrant communities;
- Demonstrated commitment to and analysis of social, racial and economic justice and their intersections; and
- Have experience in curriculum design, training, and program implementation.

Each Law Enforcement Agency will use the results of the audit to address any disparities found, and will report the results of their audit to the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, & Victim Services by December 1st every year.

It has been well documented that law enforcement agencies have a history of racial biases. For example, according to the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth & Victim Services, 50% of all the traffic stops in the State are for Black and Latinx drivers, while these groups only make up 37% of the State's population. We also know that in 2019, 51% of all deaths involving a law enforcement officer were black, with just 45% of victims being white.

HB953 represents a significant step to hold our law enforcement agencies accountable, and to ensure they are utilizing best practices to establish racial equity across every facet of public safety.

For these reasons, I ask for a favorable report on HB953.