

SB0626 Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights – Repeal & Procedures of Discipline

Stance: Fully Support

Testimony: My name is Adiena C. Britt from the 45th Legislative District of Baltimore City. I am writing to lend my full support for Bill SB0627, Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights Full Repeal.

In September of 2015, my family was terrorized by a large group of Baltimore City Police Officers during what equated to a home invasion. In the aftermath, I attempted to obtain justice through various means of elected officials, Internal Affairs, and the State's Attorney's office. Not being aware of the LEOBR, it was confounding the constant obstacles I encountered in my endeavors. It became apparent that either something within our legal system was amiss, or Baltimore City Officials didn't care about police misconduct. It was incomprehensible the treatment that I received, given my entire family; including my 12-year-old son, were held at gunpoint in our own home, my husband handcuffed, and portions of my home ransacked. We had committed no crimes. I had been reporting drug dealing stemming from a house across the street for months with no one doing anything about it; only to turn around and have them invade my sanctuary and terrorize my family.

It wasn't until 2018 that I became vaguely aware of the LEOBR, but still did not know the hindrances to justice that it caused. I began to meet other families, and become more civically engaged, which then caused me to dig deeper. I have read LEOBR in its entirety, and I must say there is no other legal document I have ever read that has caused me to actually holler at my computer while reading it. This "Bill of Rights" not only goes beyond what any rational person would consider to be expected civil rights according to The Constitution of the United States; but it actually gives the Police in the State of MD a license to participate in misconduct. Their own Chiefs and Commissioners don't have any recourse on "bad apple" officers, like they like to call them. Outside of reassignment to another precinct or division, they can't even supply the type of discipline that any other Boss in any other profession would be able to in every other industry in the State of MD. I won't even call the LEOBR "redundant" because that would imply that it has some "good points" to it, and that is not the case. The LEOBR amounts to a license to abuse their power, assault, harass, disparage, maim, falsely accuse, and even kill people. The LEOBR leaves these "bad apples" within the system to wreak havoc on citizens and even receive promotions; because their superiors, our lawmakers, and State's Attorneys are LEGALLY not allowed to punish them.

I have not failed to notice that the only proper and thorough investigations and prosecutions that have occurred in our state have been out of the U.S. Attorney's office, and that's just ludicrous. Citizens should have the right, and proper means to file grievances, have them properly and thoroughly investigated, and prosecuted within their own jurisdictions. We should not have to escalate issues to the Feds hoping that they feel like performing these duties, when it should be a local investigative unit and the local State's Attorney that brings charges. There should be no "tweaking" nor "fine-tuning" of the LEOBR. That has been tried numerous times and the alterations and amendments were cosmetic and laughable. The LEOBR needs to be fully REPEALED. I am asking for the Committee's full support of this Bill and to allow it to continue forward to be passed by the Full Senate and House of Delegates. A full repeal is the only way to attain proper reforms and oversight over all police districts within the state of Maryland. Thank you

Adiena C. Britt 6014 Old Harford Rd. Baltimore, MD 21214