



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

**HB 151
Support**

February 9, 2021

House – Judiciary

HB 151: Law Enforcement Officers’ Bill of Rights – Repeal and Procedures for Discipline

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The City of Takoma Park supports HB 151 regarding the Law Enforcement Officers’ Bill of Rights.

The City of Takoma Park has a full service police department. Our city government is committed to reimagining public safety and ensuring a culture of transparency, accountability, proactive communication, and responsiveness. Those are goals that are basic and that should be adopted across the State of Maryland and across the nation.

One of the major elements needed for reimagining public safety is to address the Maryland Law Enforcement Officer’s Bill of Rights, LEOBR. The LEOBR provision that is most problematic for us is the extended disciplinary timeline. **While our Police Chief retains the authority to discipline or fire an officer who commits an egregious act, such an action cannot be done expeditiously. A delay in action can be, and is certainly be perceived to be, a deprivation of justice for a victim or a community.** With repeal or significant amendment of LEOBR, the officer would retain the rights to appeal the firing or disciplinary action, but the Chief would have been able to act when it is most needed.

There are many components to reimagining public safety in Maryland that are needed, including changes to the Public Information Act, better provision of mental health services, stricter regulations of use of force, requirements for body worn cameras, and greater transparency overall in police matters. One significant change is the repeal or significant restructuring of the Law Enforcement Officers’ Bill of Rights.

The City of Takoma Park urges favorable consideration of HB 151, Repeal of LEOBR.