



TESTIMONY FOR SB0419
MARYLAND POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2021 – SEARCH WARRANTS

Bill Sponsor: Senator Carter

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0419 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

No knock warrants have been in the news, particularly after the horrific death of Breonna Taylor. The original intention of this legislation was to prevent no knock warrants. At this point, they are allowed, although a member of the command staff for the law enforcement agency must approve it. This does not in any way mean that the warrants will be more limited. It still gives police officers a lot of leeway to barge into a home in the middle of the night and force more tragic outcomes.

We understand the need for search warrants. We even understand the need for law enforcement officers to have the element of surprise. However, it was always our understanding that no knock warrants were a last resort and were approved by the command staff for the law enforcement agency, so we do not see how this is any different than what has existed in the past.

We believe that the original intent was the correct one and that this bill falls short of the needs of the community. We would like to see the bill amended back to its original form. The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report in committee.