



**Metro Transit Police Labor
Committee, Inc.
711 4th Street, N.W
Washington, D.C. 20001**

Chairman Colin Dorrity
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Maryland Senate
Judicial Proceedings Committee

RE: Written Testimony (OPPOSE) - HB0666 & SB0280 (WMATA – MTPD Police
Complaints Board)

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to open by thanking the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Committee members for their time. My name is Colin Dorrity. I am a Detective with the Metro Transit Police Department. I am here as Chairman of our Union, DC Lodge 1 of the Fraternal Order of Police, and on behalf of the Fraternal Order of Police Maryland State Lodge.

I am here today to speak in opposition to bills SB0280 & HB0666. I understand that it is not expedient to oppose legislation in favor of more police oversight. I want to ensure you that our Union members, the rank and file officers of the Metro Transit Police, do not oppose greater police oversight in general. Indeed, shortly after George Floyd was murdered last year, this Union recognized the need for reform locally and nationally. We put that recognition into action by submitting a mission statement to Paul Wiedefeld, Metro's General Manager, imploring him to partner with us in taking immediate steps towards reforming our agency by making ourselves more accountable and improving our relationships with the communities wherein we serve.

Specifically, we demanded that the Department stop evaluating officers using quantitative metrics and other standards that served primarily to promote unnecessary stops and arrests.



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We demanded that MTPD leadership embrace stronger ethical standards of policing and begin a peer support program.

Since then, Department Management and Union Appointees have actively engaged in writing general orders and implementing positive changes as expeditiously as possible. Additionally, we demanded that the MTPD leadership foster stronger bonds of diversity within the Department and make immediate efforts to recruit, retain, and promote Officers of Color across the board. We demanded that efforts be made to do away with a “stop and frisk” culture that, however well-intentioned in the name of crime reduction, serves primarily to anger those members of the community whose lives suffer disparate interference as a result. Finally, we demanded that the Department find and implement a nationally recognized de-escalation training program that all officers are trained on and that the community is invited to participate in. I am happy to report that Department leadership and WMATA writ large immediately partnered with the Union and formed 5 committees in pursuit of these points, each of which are actively engaged in the various aforementioned reform measures. Some are moving quickly, some less so...but all of our committees, members, and leaders are invested in the cultural change that needs to happen in modern law enforcement.

I am happy to speak about each committee's specific steps and actions separately should any of you have questions on those matters.

As you can see, we are already actively engaged in halting the use of numbers to evaluate police, and we find ourselves wholly in agreement with the originators of this bill concerning that principle. This brings me to my next point concerning our opposition to the proposed Metro Transit Police Complaints board. I draw your attention to the recently constituted MTPD Investigations Review Panel that WMATA took the initiative to form. This Panel has barely had an opportunity to function, and yet we find ourselves here with



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yet another board of oversight ready to stand in competition to that board. Should the Metro Transit Police Complaints Board be constituted by this legislature, the MTPD would find itself the only police agency in the state to have such a board overseeing it. Our officers are willing to be the vanguard of modern, reformed policing, but I believe that oversight of this agency should be in line with oversight provided for other police agencies within our jurisdictions. I will also challenge this body, or any investigatory body, to find evidence of systemic failure to investigate and act upon complaints against our officers.

I am confident that our officers face the consequences of their actions when those actions are deemed to have been in contravention to the law and ethical standards. I will not stand before you and tell you that I have never opposed the imposition of discipline on one of the officers that I represent, but I can tell that this Union has rarely disagreed that discipline was appropriate in instances where officers did not act within the standards of their training and community values. Indeed, we have often acknowledged that our Department acted appropriately in terminating officers for misconduct. Misconduct by even a handful of our officers makes the job more difficult and dangerous for the rest of us.

As a community member, I want the same highly trained and professional cops working our neighborhoods and streets that you want. I know that the officers of the Metro Transit Police want the same.

On behalf of our Union, I urge you to return an UNFAVORABLE report on this bill, but I do not want this discussion to end there. This is too important to treat as a zero-sum legislative battle. I ask you and the communities you represent to continue to work with us on the measures that we are already enacting in support of police reform.

Thank you for your time.