

## **SB0896-Office of the Attorney General – Independent Investigations – Revisions**

### **Stance: Favorable with Amendments**

**Testimony:** My name is Tawanda Jones and I reside in the 45<sup>th</sup> Legislative District in Baltimore City. I am writing to offer support for Senate Bill 896, but would like to offer suggestions for some Amendments. This bill states that once the Attorney General Independent Investigations Division is complete with an investigation of Police Brutality resulting in death; they then turn it over to the State's Attorney's office for prosecution. It also says that if the State's Attorney chooses not to prosecute the Police, that the Attorney General can opt to. Instead of the case being turned over to the State's Attorney once the investigation is complete, I would submit an amendment that states that the Prosecution should remain with the Attorney General's Office. Why should there be a hand-off to a State's Attorney that could delay justice by stalling and then deciding not to prosecute? This would only serve to cause more grief for impacted families, and delay justice.

I am the sister of Tyrone West, who was brutally executed in broad daylight on a residential street in Northeast Baltimore City in 2013. For the last NINE YEARS, I have been fighting for the officers that murdered my brother to be held accountable to no avail. As early as a week after Tyrone West was murdered, that following week I and my family created West Wednesdays to bring attention to these cases of Police Brutality and obtain accountability not just for Tyrone, but for all victims of Police Brutality! West Wednesdays has met every week since, for **450** weeks; and we still don't have accountability! In 2013, the homicide detectives were working with a State's Attorney, supposedly investigating the murder of my brother; and before all of the murderers were even interviewed, Gregg Bernstein; the State's Attorney at the time, opted to not prosecute the killer cops. He made this decision in December of 2013, meanwhile the final killer was not interviewed for the investigation until February of 2014!! That is corruption. That is a cover-up! The State's Attorneys Office works hand in hand with the Police Department to ensure that no cop ever faces a proper investigation nor prosecution in a majority of police brutality cases. The corruption and cover-up needs to Stop! If the investigation is being performed by the Attorney General's office, the Attorney General should also be prosecuting the case. Period. The State's Attorney's Office should not play a role whatsoever, since they have too close of a relationship with the Police Department.

Even with a change in who is the State's Attorney, the situation doesn't change. After fighting against Gregg Bernstein's decision to not prosecute; I have spent the last Seven years fighting to have Marilyn Mosby take another look at my brother's case and she has refused. She demanded I provide additional evidence. Not to do her job and investigate herself. Not to look at the evidence that came into the actual police investigation AFTER Bernstein refused to prosecute. She demanded that I do the work, and she still has not gotten back in contact with me after Four Years, nor to my recent inquiry as to whether or not she'd reopen and prosecute the case. Enough is enough. Something has to change, and the entanglements that are happening with the State's Attorney's Office and Police Department needs to be taken out of the equation. The Attorney General should be prosecuting the cases they are investigating. Victims' families should be able to request that the Attorney General retroactively investigate prior cases that have gone unprosecuted as well.

Another Amendment suggestion would be that the Governor should not only offer funding for the current unit, but offer additional funding for expanding the unit to ensure that the Attorney General's office has the right amount of people to prosecute these cases. Thank You.