



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0441:

Baltimore City – Civilian Review Board

****FAVORABLE****

February 16, 2022

TO: The Hon. William C. Smith, Chair; the Hon. Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice-Chair, and the members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: The Rev. Kenneth O. Phelps Jr., Co-Chair, The Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network

The Episcopal Church. In its 2018 General Convention resolution on police violence and racism, stated, “that while we honor and raise up the work of dedicated police officers who put their lives on the line to serve and protect, we also acknowledge the numerous inexcusable deaths and intimidation of people of color at the hands of law enforcement personnel in communities all over the United States”

Episcopalians are further urged to “join community and grassroots leaders in advocating ... substantive and mandatory change in police departments and policing and to allocate resources for community-based models of safety, support and prevention.”

In that spirit, the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland and its member parishes strongly urge favorable reports on this bill.

Since the death of Freddie Gray in Baltimore in 2015 the Maryland General Assembly finally began the task of addressing police violence and accountability with the passage of significant legislation in the last session. But, we also know that the new laws have set in motion at best an incremental approach, and that further refinement will be necessary to solve the urgent problem of police violence and to a mitigate the impact on the systemic racism that feeds and sustains it. We applaud this next step as it concerns the city of Baltimore.

Ending police violence can only benefit everyone. Enacting these measures would be a great next step. We have sisters and brothers who have suffered under this system for far too long.

We request a favorable report.