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SB 441 Baltimore City - Civilian Review Board
Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, February 16, 2022
Position: Favorable

The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a not-for-profit civil rights and anti-poverty legal services organization that seeks to advance social justice, economic and racial equity, and fundamental human rights in Maryland. A core aspect of its mission includes government transparency and accountability, which are critical to confidence of the governed in the government. As has been seen in recent years locally and around the country, this principle must apply to the police and their relationship with the public and communities.

SB 441 will strengthen the Baltimore City Civilian Review Board (CRB) by adding to its powers those of a Police Accountability Board (PAB) as adopted by the General Assembly in 2021. A PAB is now required in every county in Maryland, including Baltimore City.

Baltimore's CRB and local advocates have been pushing for these additional powers (now granted to PABs statewide) for a number of years. For efficiency, continuity, and accountability, these new powers belong with Baltimore's CRB, combining the authority and expertise of Baltimore's historic CRB with the additional scope and powers now recognized as critical in a PAB.

Baltimore's Civilian Review Board is its Police Accountability Board. It should have all of a PAB's authority and resources.

For the foregoing reasons, the PJC supports SB 441. Should you have any questions, please contact Debra Gardner, Legal Director, at 410-625-9409, ext. 228 or gardnerd@publicjustice.org.

The Public Justice Center is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and as such does not endorse or oppose any political party or candidate for elected office.