



March 1, 2022

Honorable Delegate Luke Clippinger
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
House Office Building, Room 101
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB991 – Baltimore City - Civilian Review Board

Dear Chair Clippinger and House Judiciary Committee Members:

On behalf of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, I thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 991 sponsored by Delegate Stephanie Smith. CAIR is America's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization.

My organization is part of the Maryland Coalition for Justice and Police Accountability - a large, diverse, statewide coalition of 100+ organizations united in seeking meaningful police reform. It includes civil rights activists, religious leaders, legal experts, and advocates for a whole host of groups lead by Black and Brown people representing communities who are disproportionately over-policed and impacted by harmful policing practices.

In the 2021 legislative session, our lawmakers passed the Maryland Police Accountability Act which in part mandates each Maryland county to form a police accountability board that provides oversight over police departments in their respective jurisdictions.

Twenty-two years ago, in 1999, the Maryland General Assembly voted to establish Baltimore City's Civilian Review Board (CRB) after years of advocacy to address concerns around police violence. This board was tasked with processing and handling complaints alleging the use of excessive force by police, among other forms of misconduct. The CRB has the authority to investigate complaints and issue subpoenas. It also reviews police department procedures and makes recommendations to Baltimore's Police Commissioner.

While the responsibilities and functions of the Baltimore City CRB, as established in the 1999 statute, largely encompass those required of newly mandated police accountability boards (PAB's), PAB's have greater oversight over broader categories of complaints, more opportunities to weigh in on disciplinary processes, and access to more expansive funding.

HB991 would essentially ensure that the city's CRB structure and authority remains intact while empowering and funding it to match the scope of PAB's mandated by the Maryland Police Accountability Act. We support this bill and respectfully urge your favorable vote. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Zainab Chaudry, Pharm.D.
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