



April 8, 2022

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

Honorable David Moon, Vice Chair
House Judiciary Committee
101 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Full Civilian Review of Internal and External Complaints

Dear Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon, and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

FOP Lodge 35 and UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO have advocated and supported the creation of civilian input in policing throughout our history, to include HB670. In our opinion, there can be no true police reform without full civilian review of all disciplinary matters, free from biased political and bureaucratic entanglements.

Last year, we partnered with the state legislature to ensure that all civilian complaints of brutality and misconduct would be adjudicated through a fair and impartial process for all involved, driven by a civilian disciplinary board.

In fact, FOP Lodge 35 and UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO advocated for greater civilian oversight than the legislature enacted in HB670.

It is troublesome that there is an effort by some who represent law enforcement to deviate from the legislature's intent of HB670, and instead, create a separate process for internal complaints. This represents a dangerous attempt to circumvent civilian input of the administrative charging committees, diminishing transparency, and increasing subjectivity, bias and preferential treatment of some officers over others.

If the legislature decides to revisit HB670 to address both internal and external complaints, then the easiest, fairest and most logical approach is to ensure that all complaints follow the citizen complaint process outlined in HB670. This would treat all law enforcement officers in the state fairly and equally. It would also eliminate a biased disciplinary process led by political appointees and bureaucrats, instead of civilians, which is the same failed policing model that Maryland has struggled under for decades, given the dark, storied history of bias and discrimination within the police disciplinary system, evidenced by recent settlements in Prince George's County, and elsewhere.

Any effort by the legislature to expand the scope of HB670 to both internal and external complaints, must also ensure that the process is governed and adjudicated by an all-civilian review board that is fair, impartial, unbiased, free from special interests, and bound by the disciplinary matrix enacted by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC).

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Lee Holland in black ink.

Lee Holland, President
FOP Lodge 35

Handwritten signature of Gino Renne in black ink.

Gino Renne, President/IVP
UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO