



TESTIMONY TO THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

HB 1044 Public Safety – Use of Force Incident Reports

POSITION: Support

BY: Nancy Soreng - LWVMD President

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As a response to George Floyd’s death and the death of other civilians by law enforcement personnel using excessive force, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 (the “Act”). A significant portion of the Act defines what constitutes a reasonable use of force and when a law enforcement officer could use such force. The Act also requires that a law enforcement officer exhaust other interventions before using force.

HB 1055 prevents police departments from burying incidents of the use of force by law enforcement personnel. It requires police departments to document each time that law enforcement personnel use force. It further mandates that these reports include the demographics of the person upon whom force was used. Under HB 1055, each police department must publish aggregate data regarding when and under what circumstances law enforcement personnel use force. This data can help create policies to ensure that law enforcement personnel only use necessary and reasonable force.

The League of Women Voters supports policies that promote transparency in government. HB 1044 provides needed transparency regarding the use of force by law enforcement personnel.

The LWVMD, representing 1500+ concerned citizens throughout Maryland, strongly urges a favorable report on HB 1044.