

Testimony for the House Judiciary Committee

March 1, 2022

HB [991](#) – Baltimore City - Civilian Review Board

FAVORABLE

Good afternoon,

My name is Ian Bukowski. I am a certified nursing assistant, soon to be nurse, and longtime resident of Baltimore in District 43. I am writing in support of HB 991, which continues the progress that has been made to build police accountability in the city. This is an essential step in improving community relations, building back trust, and ultimately ensuring safety in Baltimore.

Having mostly lived in Baltimore since 2001, I have lost count of the stories of eroded faith in policing in this city. Nearly everyone I know has a friend or relative who has been stopped inappropriately, pulled over without a reason, or spent the night in jail with no charges. All of these actions have consequences: arriving late to a job interview, missing work or school, endless stress and anxiety. I've seen police undermine and intimidate victims of crimes and interfere with delivery of healthcare. While some of these instances may be addressed by internal policy or changes within the district attorney's office, far too few reforms have focused on accountability and improving the broader culture of policing. It is imperative that we expand the role of the CRB and fund their efforts and equip them with an independent council.

As a healthcare worker, I can relate to the fact that policing is a challenging job that is likely tougher in Baltimore than many other places. Knowing that nursing is one of the most trusted professions in our society, I also see the direct link between a culture of accountability and transparency. Nurses are trusted *because of*, not in spite of, the standards they are held to. Some opponents of police reform might point to the physical challenges, stressful environment, and difficult job as reasons to avoid needed reforms, but these are not mutually exclusive. High standards, including independent accountability are the hallmark of professionalism and fundamental to build the faith and respect necessarily to make our city safer.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 991 (and accompanying SB 441). This bill is a key part of the movement to increase accountability, cultivate trust, and improve public safety for everyone in the city. I encourage a favorable report on HB 991.

Thank you,

Ian Bukowski
District 43