



LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION PARTNERSHIP

ADVANCING JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY SOLUTIONS

121 Mystic Avenue, Suite 9
Medford, Massachusetts 02155
(781) 393.6985

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Lieutenant Diane Goldstein, Ret.
Nevada, USA

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Deputy Chief Wayne Harris, Ret.
Chair, New York, USA

Major Neill Franklin, Ret.
Treasurer, Florida, USA

Professor Jody Armour
Secretary, California, USA

Sergeant Terry Blevins, Fmr.
California, USA

Chief Mike Butler, Ret.
Colorado, USA

Ms. Nadine Jones
New Jersey, USA

Captain Leigh Maddox, Ret.
Maryland, USA

Captain Sonia Y.W. Pruitt, Ret.
Maryland, USA

Superintendent Richard N. Van Wickler, Ret.
New Hampshire, USA

Detective Sergeant Neil Woods, Ret.
Derbyshire, England, LEAP UK

Date: February 22, 2022

To: Maryland Judiciary Committee

Re: HB 958 - Criminal Procedure Post Conviction Review

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Distinguished Members of the Committee,

I spent 27 years with the Baltimore Police Department, rising from patrol officer to major. I am here to support HB 958, which would allow prosecutors to initiate post-conviction reviews, as a speaker for the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP).

LEAP is a nonprofit group of police, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice professionals who speak from firsthand experience. Our mission is to make communities safer by focusing law enforcement resources on the greatest threats to public safety, addressing the root causes of crime, and working toward healing police-community relations.

The most important barrier I see to law enforcement reducing violent crime is the cooperation of the community. Without communication from the community, we cannot prevent crime, and we cannot solve crime. Our detectives depend on information from witnesses to come up with leads, understand what happened, and close cases. We need the trust of community members.

HB 958 is a step in the right direction to help Maryland's officers regain that trust. This legislation would allow the State's Attorney to review past cases and, if it serves the interest of justice, recommend a reduced sentence for an incarcerated person. These individual case reviews would contribute to restoring faith in the criminal justice system. I cannot overstate how important the community's faith in the criminal justice system is to the police's ability to protect and serve.

LawEnforcementActionPartnership.org

Formerly known as Law Enforcement Against Prohibition

We also know that shortening unnecessarily long sentences reduces overcrowding and frees up criminal justice resources to focus on those who really do pose a public safety risk. Some people change and can be rehabilitated. We must reserve our limited prison space for those who threaten our safety. Having the opportunity for sentence review would also incentivize positive behavior in prison.

Another benefit of HB 958 is that it would help address the dismal record of racial disparities in Maryland prisons. Over 70% of the nearly 18,000 people in [Maryland's prisons](#) are Black, compared to about 30% of the [general population](#). Many of these people entered prison over a decade ago, with sentences that would have been much different if decided today.

Allowing prosecutors to conduct post-conviction reviews is the right thing to do - for incarcerated individuals, for communities, and for Maryland's justice system. We would be following in the footsteps of Illinois and three other states that recently passed laws to allow their prosecutors to initiate case reviews.

Many thanks for your time today and the opportunity to speak on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Maj. Mike Hilliard (Ret.)
Baltimore Police Department