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Executive Director

DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
OFFICE OF PROGRAM EVALUATION AND
GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY
MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Michael Powell
Director

March 25, 2022

To: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Delegate David Moon, and members of the Judiciary Committee

Re: SB 819 (Hettleman)

House Judiciary Committee, Tuesday, March 29, 2022

LETTER FOR INFORMATION

I am the Director of the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA), in the Department of Legislative Services (DLS). **As a DLS employee I do not testify for or against any bill.** I am submitting this written testimony for informational purposes because in January 2022 my office published an [evaluation](#) of the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services (GOCPYVS) which included a recommendation that the Executive Director be appointed with the advice and consent of the Senate. What follows is the evidence that led to this recommendation.

First, we found that the GOCPYVS budget has grown by over a third since 2017, to over \$225 million per year, making it larger than nine (9) principal departments. Ninety-five (95%) percent of that budget is expended as grants and is thus categorized as "object eleven (11)" in the budget, which limits transparency. To our knowledge it is the largest unit of state government that does not have any input from the legislature in the appointment of its leader.

Second, about two-thirds of their budget is general fund, and about sixty (60%) percent is disbursed as grants that are in some ways based on the Office's discretion. For example, rather than use a mandated formula, the Office determines, through a process, who the grantees will be and how much funding they will receive.

Third, the Executive Director does much more than manage the Office. They or their designee serve on more than thirty (30) boards and commissions, chair at least seven (7), and staff at least six (6).


Fourth, the Office was created, and continues to exist, by Executive Order, and is not defined by chapter law.

Finally, our observation of bills introduced, committee hearings, and floor debate, tells us that crime and crime prevention are important issues to the General Assembly, and GOCPYVS is responsible for preparing the three-year Maryland Comprehensive State Crime Control and Prevention Plan, and updating it annually.

These five observations were what led us to our recommendation that the GOCPYVS Executive Director be appointed with advise and consent of the Senate.

Thank you for receiving my written testimony, which is strictly for informational purposes and is neither in support of, nor against, SB 819.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Powell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and a smaller "P".

Michael Powell
Director, Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability
Department of Legislative Services