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Judiciary Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 21, 2022

The Honorable Delegate Luke Clippinger
Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee
6 Bladen Street, Room 101
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

House Bill 1044

Good afternoon, Chair Clippinger, Vice-Chair Moon, and members of the House Judiciary Committee. I am Delegate Nicole Williams of District 22, and I will be testifying today in favor of **House Bill 1044**, also known as **Public Safety - Use of Force Incident Reports**. This bill aims to enhance police data collection and accountability about use of force by law enforcement officers and police officers. By passing this legislation, we can keep the public informed and hold the officers accountable who abuse their power.

By altering a reporting requirement that applies to law enforcement or police officers who are involved in the use of force incidents in the line of duty, we are able to ensure liability and culpability from those who have been trusted to protect our communities. Enforcing this requirement by July 1st, 2023, will allow time for the local enforcement agencies to establish the necessary infrastructure to publish the accumulated data pertaining to the use of force by police officers as required by this bill on its public website.

As you know, police reform has been a long-debated topic in our country, in Maryland and on this committee. Recent incidents of unjustified use of force show that enacting this bill will help protect our community by creating transparency in the use of force data. Although we do have the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) to generate statistics of actions taken by law enforcement, we are well aware of the fact that the UCR is unreliable, as we see large gaps in their data. This is due to the fact that agencies participate voluntarily and there is no requirement for them to submit data; therefore, it is inaccurate and unreliable.

The public is demanding transparency about uses of force incidents by law enforcement and that officers are held accountable for their actions or reprimanded if need be. By enacting this bill, we are making an effort to bridge the gap between the deteriorating relationship between our communities and law enforcement. This bill also enhances the amazing work that this committee did last session in passing sweeping police reforms. This measure is necessary in order to protect our communities and help them regain trust in the system.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to give a favorable report on House Bill 1044.

Sincerely,

Nicole A. Williams, Esq.

Delegate Nicole A. Williams, Esq.