



TESTIMONY FOR SB0409
Police Accountability Boards and Administrative Charging Committees -
Municipal Corporations

Bill Sponsor: Senator Watson

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0409 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members are very supportive of police officers, but believe just as strongly that there should be accountability to the public. In every successful community, there is a working trust between the community and the police. In Maryland, as in many other states, there have been too many instances where it is clear that the police are being their own enforcers and generally not ensuring that they are transparent with the community, nor are they able to discipline one of their own who hurts a community member.

Enter the Police Accountability Board, which has become the only way that some transparency and accountability can be accomplished. This bill would require each municipality to have a Police Accountability Board. Our members believe that this is a wise course of action. It would give the community a more formal mechanism for handling complaints of police misconduct and would also allow for reporting of the number of complaints and their disposition, which is information the community needs. Finally, it would allow for some positive ideas and policy recommendations to be made available to the police force.

Our only concern is that, although the Police Accountability Board would not include active, serving officers, we believe it should also not include any retired or former officers. It should be purely civilian.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report in committee.