



Senate Bill 409

Police Accountability Boards and Administrative Charging Committees – Municipal Corporations

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: February 21, 2023

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 409. This bill would authorize municipal governments to establish their own police accountability boards (PAB) and administrative charging committees (ACC) to provide civilian oversight for investigations of police misconduct.

Counties were required to establish, staff, and manage a PAB and an ACC in every jurisdiction as mandated by law. MACo believes municipalities should be authorized with comparable powers within their own jurisdictions. This legislation could partially relieve counties of their very broad responsibility to provide civilian oversight for misconduct allegations involving all law enforcement bodies in their jurisdiction. For scale, without this legislation, Prince George's PAB and ACC would be managing this process for all twenty-seven law enforcement agencies operating within its jurisdiction.

Municipalities overseeing the investigations of their own law enforcement agencies will ensure the work is specific to the needs of their community and that the cases are reviewed in a timely manner. This momentum can serve to reinforce the public trust in the process by avoiding frustrating backlogs and bottle necks on matters where residents insist on speed and attentiveness. Allowing municipalities the autonomy to establish these entities will streamline implementation and fulfill the overall intent of community participation.

The integrity of the civilian oversight process is paramount to fulfilling the goals of law enforcement accountability. The mandated implementation is a task that has been absolutely and devotedly undertaken by all county governments. The allowance of municipalities to establish their own process as well preserves a trust in local authorities that the system demands, while sharing the administrative responsibilities with the appropriate parties. For this reason, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 409 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.