

Testimony for the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Tuesday, February 14th, 2023

SB 285 - County Police Accountability Boards – Investigation of Complaints of Police

Misconduct

FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the committee,

My name is Dr. Kimberly Muktarian, President of Save Our Sons and CEO of SOS Consulting Firm and we provide advocacy, research and policy analysis for government agencies. Our research has provided various aspects of the current justice system and its parallels to modern day slavery. The misconduct of officers dates back to early slave patrollers who are now given Qualified Immunity without general oversight and public access to records and files. The deplorable conditions of law enforcement and its ability to maintain protection under the law at taxpayer's expense is both unconstitutional and extremely negligent as fiduciaries of justice. We are well aware of the emotional and financial cost passed down to the Black Community when Injustice is inflicted verses fair and equitable access to Equal Protection Under the Law. I am in support of SB 285 because it creates a fair and balanced approach for communities at large and removes the possibilities of continued corruption and death often found within the Black Community by law enforcement. Citizens should not be held accountable for the financial burdens nor the socio-economic impact of an unfettered system. The provisions outlined in SB 285 play an essential role in our pursuit of meaningful, independent police accountability boards at the county level. I am grateful for your leadership and the Committee's initial support of police accountability measures and the Maryland Police Accountability Act throughout the 2021 session. However, implementation of HB 670 throughout the past year has made it clear that legislation is needed to clarify the authority local governing bodies have to empower their PAB's. In order for local PABs to follow through on the fundamental goals of the MPAA, the legislature must clarify that local bodies can give their PABs the power to conduct independent investigations into misconduct complaints.

The main function of Police Accountability Boards is to assess the quality of police discipline and issue reports and recommendations to improve police accountability. Without the ability to conduct their own separate and concurrent investigations into complaints, the boards lack meaningful capacity to do so and must accept law enforcement investigations at face value. Fundamentally, without investigatory and subpoena powers, PABs are largely hamstrung in their ability to fulfill their role. For the foregoing reasons, I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 285.

Appreciatively,

Dr. Kimberly Muktarian

1510 H Street, Suite 150

Washington, DC 20002

919.349.7622 or saveoursonsus@yahoo.com