

To: House Judiciary Proceedings Committee Members

From: James Gormley, Member of the Police Accountability Board of Howard County

February 20, 2022

I am a member of the Police Accountability Board of Howard County, writing to you in my individual capacity. I write to express my support of Senate Bill 409, with an important amendment. I would note:

1. My concern (and the consequential need for an amendment to Senate Bill 409) arises with respect to the following: the new provisions for Municipal Corporations contain a significant and detrimental change, one which would result in a significant de-scoping of a PAB's authority and responsibilities for municipalities. Namely:

(a) Existing language in 3-102 (a) (1), covering counties:

hold quarterly meetings with heads of law enforcement agencies and otherwise work with law enforcement agencies and the county government to improve matters of policing; [emphasis added]

(b) Proposed language in 3-102 (c)(1) (I) covering Municipal Corporations:

HOLD QUARTERLY MEETINGS WITH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION AND HEADS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION IN THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION TO IMPROVE MATTERS OF POLICING IN THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION;

2. The omission in the Bill of the language "and otherwise work....." takes away the broad and general authorization (currently provided for counties in the existing legislation) for PABs to *[otherwise] work with* LEAs etc. to improve matters of policing. Now the only PAB authorization is *to meet quarterly* with LEAs etc. to do so.
3. It is unclear why the General Assembly would wish to provide significantly less authority to PABs in municipalities than currently exists for counties. I recommend the following amendment to the original Bill 409's text (which would fully replicate the provisions currently applying to counties):

HOLD QUARTERLY MEETINGS WITH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION AND HEADS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION IN THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION AND OTHERWISE WORK WITH THOSE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES TO IMPROVE MATTERS OF POLICING IN THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION;

Respectfully submitted,

James R. Gormley
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