



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter

**In Favor of SB758- Baltimore City –
Control Over Powers of Police Commissioner**

**Before the Judicial Proceedings Committee
on March 1, 2023**

- **For more than a decade, advocates have been working to give the Baltimore City Council legislative oversight of the Baltimore City Police Department (BPD).**
- **In 2021, the General Assembly passed legislation to reestablish BPD as a City agency provided that Baltimore residents ratify an amendment to the City Charter.**
- **In November 2022, Baltimore residents overwhelmingly voted in favor making the BPD a City agency. Of the more than 132,000 Baltimore residents who voted on Question H (the local control ballot measure), the vast majority – over 82% - favored it.**
- **As a result, as of January 1, 2023, Baltimore City’s police department is a City agency; however, the City Council is still powerless to legislate much-needed reforms to the BPD.**

- **The General Assembly must make one more change in the City Charter to enable local control as the City still does not have local control. The General Assembly has to pass SB758/HB853 to remove one line in the City Charter which prohibits the City Council from infringing on the power of the Police Commissioner.**
- **The federal consent decree mandated the formation of a Civilian Oversight Task Force to make recommendations to strengthen police accountability and police-community relations. In its 2018 report, the Task Force stated, “The BPD will never be fully accountable to its residents until full control of the department is returned to the city.” The Task Force stressed the importance of the City Council having legislative power and recommended that such change happen "with all deliberate speed."**
- **I urge you to implement the will of the citizens of Baltimore, clearly expressed in the last election, by immediately passing SB758/HB853, which will restore full legislative authority to the Baltimore City Council.**

I therefore ask for a favorable report on SB758.

Sincerely,



Jill P. Carter, Esq.