



Bill: SB409 - Police Accountability Boards and Administrative Charging Committees – Municipal Corporations

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 21, 2023

Position: Support

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

The City of Gaithersburg writes to support SB409 - Police Accountability Boards and Administrative Charging Committees – Municipal Corporations.

SB409 would authorize a municipal corporation in the State to establish its own police accountability board and administrative charging committees, a power not afforded to municipalities through the Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021. As you know, under this law, the authority to establish PAB's and ACC's was limited to counties. While we consider the establishment of PAB's and ACC's to be laudatory positive steps towards affirming public trust in law enforcement by holding those who violate that trust accountable, we believe that it was a mistake to deny municipal agencies with the capability and capacity to institute their own boards and commissions. SB409 would rectify this omission.

The City of Gaithersburg and other municipalities would benefit from this revision for the following reasons:

- There is no current requirement for municipal representation on these county-created entities. Specific review of municipal trends, practices, and recommendations should be made and considered by municipal officials;
- Keeping the boards and committee “local” means a heightened familiarity with that Police Department’s regulations and policies;
- These boards and committees must be established with the very same standards as those established at the County level;
- There is a backlog of disciplinary cases in Montgomery County, so requiring Gaithersburg Police Department cases to be processed through a County Board and Committee is likely to lead to substantial delays in disciplinary actions; and

City of Gaithersburg • 31 South Summit Avenue, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877-2038
301-258-6300 • FAX 301-948-6149 • cityhall@gaitthersburgmd.gov • gaitthersburgmd.gov

MAYOR
Jud Ashman

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Neil Harris
Lisa Henderson
Jim McNulty
Ryan Spiegel
Robert Wu

CITY MANAGER
Tanisha R. Briley

- Other municipalities agree, which is why the Maryland Municipal League (MML) has made this a legislative priority in 2023.

We believe that this legislation will establish essential representation, providing both public safety and accountability benefits across the State. We respectfully request a favorable report on SB409.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 301-466-5350 or our government relations consultant, Therese Hessler, at therese@ashlargr.com. We appreciate your support.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jud Ashman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jud Ashman
Mayor