

Testimony for the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 13th, 2023

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

Favorable

Dear Smith, Vice Char Waldstreicher, and members of the committee:

My name is Charlene Rock-Foster, a resident of Baltimore City, and I support SB285. The provisions outlined in SB 285 play an essential role in our pursuit of meaningful, independent police accountability boards at the county level. I appreciate the leadership behind the initial support of police accountability measures and the Maryland Police Accountability Act (MPAA) throughout the 2021 session. I did notice however the need for clarity on the implementation of HB 670 throughout the past year to empower police accountability boards (PABs). In doing some research, I believe the legislature be clear that local bodies can give their PABs the power to conduct independent investigations into misconduct complaints, giving local PABs to follow through on the fundamental goals of the MPAA.

As someone who is connected to several families who have been harmed by police misconduct, I can see the need for the implementation of subpoena powers and independent investigation. Those families experienced going through submitting complaints. Some families had investigations that had missing critical information and struggled in getting full reports. One family never received the investigation report at all. It is already distressing for those families to experience the harm inflicted through police misconduct, then for then to experience complications in accessing a full and proper investigations after legislations passed for accountability, creates more distrust in holding police accountable.

For the foregoing reasons, I urge a favorable report on SB285. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.