

**STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**



The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee
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Mr. Chairman Smith, Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I urge a favorable report on SB658, Human Relations – Patterns and Practices of Civil Rights Violations – Remedies. This legislation gives the Office of the Attorney General authority to investigate and remedy patterns or practices of misconduct by law enforcement and others responsible for the custody or supervision of civilians.

The first piece of patterns and practices legislation was passed by Congress in 1994 following the beating of Rodney King. California was the first state to obtain pattern and practice authority, which has now also been adopted by nine other states' attorneys generals: Colorado, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nevada, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Washington. SB658 is also consistent with the federal George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021 which would have provided states nationwide with authority to conduct pattern or practice investigations.

We have seen numerous cases of misconduct from Rodney King to Tyre Nichols. It is imperative that our state works to address systemic misconduct by law enforcement and others in the criminal justice system to keep people who live and visit our state safe. Patterns and practice investigations will increase public confidence and trust in the police, provide our state government the continued benefit of lower litigation cost, lower rates of violent crime, and improve agency operations. Riverside Police Department in California is one example of reform agreements resulting in stronger communities, crime reduction, and improved trust in law enforcement. After California entered a consent decree to reform the Riverside Police Department (RPD), complaints against RPD officers plummeted by almost 80 percent.¹ Data from the DOJ also shows that violent crime rates declined in all 10 of the analyzed jurisdictions, following the national trend.²

¹ Connor Maxwell and Danyelle Solomon, Expanding the Authority of State Attorneys General to Combat Police Misconduct, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS (Dec. 12, 2018), <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/expanding-authority-state-attorneys-general-combat-police-misconduct/>.

² Kenny Lo and Sarah Figgatt, Violent Crime Rates Declined in 10 Jurisdictions Following Comprehensive Police Reform, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS (Nov. 16, 2020), <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/violent-crime-rates-declined-10-jurisdictions-following-comprehensive-police-reform/>.

During my State of the State address, I mentioned the need to change the trajectory of our state for generations to come. We must take this step to eliminate the pattern or practice of misconduct in Maryland to keep our communities safe and improve the operation of state agencies.

Again, I urge a favorable report on SB658, Human Relations – Patterns and Practices of Civil Rights Violations – Remedies.

Best Regards,

Governor Wes Moore