

March 1, 2023

Rob Ferrell  
District 40, Park Heights Neighborhood

**TESTIMONY ON SB0758**  
**Baltimore City, Control Over Powers of the Police Commissioner**

**TO:** Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Rob Ferrell

**OPENING:** My name is Rob Ferrell. I am a resident of District 40, in the Park Heights community. I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0758: Baltimore City, Control Over Powers of the Police Commissioner.

**INTRO:** *I am a senior organizer with Organizing Black, a grassroots member-led organization dedicated to the liberation of Black folk.*

**Body Paragraph:**

*I am here today because the City of Baltimore still does not have complete legislative authority over its Police Department.*

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 once more, with 82% of the electorate being in favor. As a result, as of January 1, 2023, Baltimore City's police department is a City agency, however City Council is still powerless to legislate much-needed reforms to the BPD.

The only thing needed at this point is amending Article 2, to complete the process. During the public city council hearing just last week, members of the Local Control Advisory Board, members of the city council, and folks from the city law department all agreed that this is the case.

It is paramount that there should no further debate, delay, or obfuscation of the pathway forward. Implementation should happen immediately, (june 1, 2023, as outlined in this bill). I implore you all to complete the transfer of local control now, so that the city can regain sovereign control over its police force. The residents of Baltimore deserve accountability and deserve justice. And we can't get that without local control.

**We want the City Council, our local, elected legislators, to have legislative authority to make changes to BPD policy.**

To fulfill the will of Baltimoreans, the Maryland General Assembly must immediately restore control of the BPD to Baltimore residents and you, our local, elected legislators. Further delay is unacceptable. **Please advocate for [SB758/](#)[HB853](#) in the General Assembly, the corrective legislation that would restore local control of the Baltimore Police Department to Baltimore City on June 1, 2023.**