

Dear Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Liz Simon-Higgs, and I am a resident of District 46, Baltimore City. **I am testifying in support of SB 758 to Amend Baltimore City's Charter for Local Control of Police.** I am submitting this testimony as a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice – Baltimore and in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety and Jobs (CJSJ).



As you may recall, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation in 2021 to reestablish the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) as a City agency, provided that Baltimore voters ratify an amendment to the City Charter. In November 2022, Baltimore residents overwhelmingly voted in favor (82%!) of this charter amendment, to transfer control of the BPD from the State to Baltimore City. So as of January 1, 2023, Baltimore City's police department is a City agency, BUT it really has no accountability: City Council is still powerless to legislate much-needed reforms to the BPD.

In order to finish the process of transferring legislative power over the BPD to Baltimore City, the General Assembly remove ONE line in the City Charter which prohibits the City Council from infringing on the power of the Police Commissioner. That is what [SB758/HB853](#) (Sen. Carter/Del. Smith are the sponsors) accomplishes.

Since January 1, 2023, the BPD's policies have been accountable to nobody. And Baltimore City funds the BPD at a rate of over \$1,500,000 PER DAY! (See Baltimore City's budget, which allocates more than \$550,000,000 to the BPD.) The people's will, clearly expressed in the last election, should be carried out immediately by passing SB758/HB853, which will restore legislative authority to our City Council on June 1, 2023.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **favorably on Baltimore City – Control Over Powers of Police Commissioner SB758.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Liz Simon-Higgs
308 E Randall Street, Baltimore, MD 21230
Showing Up for Racial Justice - Baltimore