

HB0975-Baltimore City - Control Over Powers of Police Commissioner

Stance: Unfavorable

Testimony: My name is Adiena Britt and I reside within the 45th Legislative District of Baltimore City. I am writing in order to express my displeasure and my position against HB0975. I have been working on the Local Control of BPD issue since 2018 and have stuck with it through every obstacle and hindrance that has been thrown at it by some City Delegates and Senators. HB0975 is yet another Obstacle and Hindrance put forth by two of my own Delegates, which I am very upset about. This Bill is written to “buy more time” on an issue whose time has already expired. Why are sabotaging measures being taken with this issue? I’m literally questioning my vote for y’all. There is no need to push this issue into this year any further, let alone try to have it kicked into 2024!!!! What’s wrong with y’all? I am tired of having to address this issue, and this “mistake” in not addressing the Legislative coverage over the Police Commissioner and BPD. This having been “missed” in the 2021 Legislation is mind-boggling. I have had to testify via video, via written testimony, and in person at the City Council and using this means in Annapolis. I’m tired of having to testify, and follow this issue.

With the Legislation that passed in 2021, Local Control was forced to become a ballot initiative in order to change the City Charter. It also forced an “Advisory Board” to be established, and we were cool with that; even though it managed to kick the can down the road a year. I was a staunch advocate of “Question H”, even hand-making signs for people’s lawns to vote for it. It passed with 82% of the vote, and we thought we had accomplished something. Only come to find out that this vital portion of the Law was “missed” in 2021. I found this out via an in-person City Council meeting on February 21st of this year! What it amounts to is that NO ONE in the State of MD has Legislative Power over the BPD right now! Not only that, but there’s been no Legislative Oversight since January 1st of 2022!!!! So, they’ve gone OVER a YEAR without any governance! This is Unacceptable!

This Bill was submitted in bad faith up against HB0853 and SB0758! I honestly don’t understand why. The Advisory Board portion is covered in my next paragraph, so is unwarranted. The Legislative portion of this bill is just wholly unacceptable, especially the effective date. You have to be kidding me, and the rest of the scores of constituents that have been working on this Local Control issue for YEARS!! It’s an insult and a slap in the face for people who voted for you thinking you had our causes in your minds and hearts. There is absolutely no need to delay this issue any further. I’m urging the remainder of the Delegation to vote against this nonsense!

The Mayor and City Council of Baltimore City need to have this Legislative Authority provided and enacted AS SOON AS HUMANLY POSSIBLE. The Advisory Board is confident that they will have a final report as early as the first week of April. They’ve also supplied reports to Annapolis in December of 2021 AND December of 2022. The Delegates and Senators in the MD General Assembly need to cease and desist delaying the inevitable any longer. This piece of Legislation needs to be QUASHED!

The BPD has been improperly governed since the 1860s, and have proven themselves to be above the law time and time again. Citizens of Baltimore City who have been the victims of Police Brutality have had enough! Stop kicking the issue down the road and stop trying to hinder the inevitable which is BPD being Legislated by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore City, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY!!!! Not December, 2023! Certainly NOT 2024!!! The Time is NOW!