



**State Law Enforcement
Officers Labor Alliance**
542 Ritchie Highway
Severna Park, Maryland 21146



March 7, 2023

Delegate Luke Clippinger
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
101 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: HB 857 Office of the Attorney General – Independent Investigations Division –
Authority to Prosecute – OPPOSE

Dear Chair Clippinger:

The State Law Enforcement Labor Alliance (SLEOLA) is the exclusive representative for 1,757 active state law enforcement officers. We are writing in Opposition to House Bill 857 which would allow for the Office of the Attorney General - Independent Investigations Division (IID) the authority to prosecute police involved incidents.

SLEOLA generally disagrees with the underlying premise of the bill. Currently, IID has the authority to investigate all civilian deaths while in custody of the police. This provides transparency for the public by not allowing a police department to investigate cases against their own officers. After the investigation is complete, it is then reviewed by the Office State's Attorney in the jurisdiction where the incident occurred. These are the checks and balances on which our Democratic government is based. Local State's Attorneys are elected by the local jurisdiction and are accountable to the local community. By removing the local State's Attorney, all transparency is removed with IID and they essentially become judge and jury with no oversight. Under the bill, IID will lose all partiality and fairness.

HB 857 eliminates the checks and balances in the Judicial System and would allow for the IID unit to operate unchecked. With unchecked power, the IID unit could essentially ruin the lives and families of police officers doing their jobs to protect citizens. No one group in government should ever have ultimate authority over any of its citizens, and HB 857 should not be approved by the Judiciary Committee.

Thank you for your time, attention, and consideration to this matter.

Sincerely,

Brian Gill
President

cc: Members, House Judiciary Committee