



Testimony for the Judiciary Committee

February 20, 2023

HB 682- Public Safety – Law Enforcement Agencies – Positive Community Feedback

GREGORY BROWN
PUBLIC POLICY
COUNSEL

Unfavorable

AMERICAN CIVIL
LIBERTIES UNION
OF MARYLAND

3600 CLIPPER MILL
ROAD
SUITE 350
BALTIMORE, MD 21211
T/410-889-8555
F/410-366-7838

The ACLU of Maryland opposes HB 682, which would require the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop a uniform citizen positive community feedback process for all law enforcement agencies across the state to follow. The bill would also classify the positive community feedback an officer receives as non-personnel records to be released upon request. We believe this bill to be a cosmetic endeavor on the part of law enforcement proponents and not at all necessary for the purposes for police accountability and transparency.

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OFFICERS AND
DIRECTORS
HOMAYRA ZIAD
PRESIDENT

This bill is unnecessary to the goals of Police Reform

DANA VICKERS
SHELLEY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

While supporters of this bill claim that the bill would allow for the public to be fully informed about the record of police officers, the additional information being made public would be irrelevant to an inquiry or request for information being made after instances of police misconduct. While it is important, and incumbent on, police departments to change the way they engage with the communities they police in more positive, helpful ways, every instance of a positive police interaction with a community member is not relevant to misconduct or use of force complaints being made against an officer. Additionally, positive feedback should not be used as probative evidence that a police officer would or would not engage in unjustifiable misconduct, nor should their instances of positive feedback be used as some form of a balancing test as proof of how 'good' of an officer they are when they have factually committed misconduct, abuse, or excessive use of force.

ANDREW FREEMAN
GENERAL COUNSEL

This bill is a reactionary measure to the public having access to police misconduct records of officers. This legislature passed Anton's Law in 2021 in response to the public outcry for greater transparency from law enforcement. It was needed to ensure that when instances of police misconduct occur, the public is aware and can identify patterns in behavior by officers that may be discriminatory or harmful to the community. Across

Maryland, there are police departments who still have yet to comply with Anton's law. Implementation of and compliance with Anton's law is critical to restoring trust in the police to the communities they serve. Any efforts by law enforcement agencies to increase trust and build that relationship should be focused on the implementation and compliance of police accountability measures that the public has asked for. This bill is not the result of calls from communities across Maryland but instead a push to give officers a pat on the back for otherwise performing their sworn duties.

For the foregoing reasons the ACLU of Maryland opposes HB 682.

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