



TESTIMONY FOR SB0290

Office of the Attorney General - Independent Investigations Division - Authority to Prosecute

Bill Sponsor: Senator Smith

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0290 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

It is unfortunate that policing has become such a flashpoint in our society. Trust in police officers is at an all-time low, even though many officers do their jobs with professionalism and courtesy. The problem is not the small percentage of officers who bully and abuse the people they have sworn to serve. The problem is the system that allows the local police offices to manage investigations into their own employees with little oversight and transparency.

Too many officers have committed atrocities and simply moved to another police office in another location. Too many cases have never seen justice, or even the appearance of an investigation.

This bill will expand the reach of the Independent Investigations Division in Attorney General's Office to allow them to investigate killings of individuals in the state, as well as any other ancillary crimes that might have been submitted.

Our members have much more confidence that an independent party will do a thorough job. We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.