

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am submitting this testimony as a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with our accountability partner, the Campaign for Justice, Safety and Jobs (CJSJ). I am a resident of District 46, and **I am testifying in support of HB 853 to Amend Baltimore City's Charter for Local Control of Police.**



In 2021, the General Assembly passed legislation to return control of the Baltimore City Police Department to the city, provided that Baltimore residents ratified an amendment to the City Charter. In November 2022, Baltimore residents overwhelmingly voted in favor (82%!) of the charter amendment and according to the enabling legislation, local control was to return to the city on January 1, 2023.

Unfortunately, city leaders believe that they are still prevented from exercising that control by article 2, section 27 of the Baltimore City charter, which states that the city may not pass laws or take actions infringing on the power of the police commissioner. SB 758 would simply correct this, thereby completing the General Assembly's intended transfer of power over BCPD to the city. The City Council is then free to implement changes to the police department as it sees fit, including taking any actions recommended by the Local Control Advisory Board.

Baltimore City is still the *only* locality in Maryland and only one of two localities in the entire country that does not have control over its own police department. Further delay of implementation of local control of the Baltimore Police Department is unacceptable, as it unjustly limits representative democracy and police accountability in a majority-Black city.

We cannot and will not wait any longer to make a technical correction that allows us to control our own police department in accordance with the strongly expressed wishes of city residents and the General Assembly.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **favorably on Baltimore City – Control Over Powers of Police Commissioner HB 853.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Keipper
2425 Fleet St.

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore