

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

I am a resident of Maryland District 40, living in the Medfield neighborhood of Baltimore. **I am testifying in support of HB 853 to Amend Baltimore City's Charter for Local Control of Police.** 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).



In 2021, the General Assembly passed legislation to reestablish BPD as a City agency provided that Baltimore residents ratify an amendment to the City Charter. In November 2022, Baltimore residents overwhelmingly voted in favor (82%!) of a charter amendment to transfer control of the BPD from the State to Baltimore City. This win was the result of years of work by community members and advocates. But, as a result, as of January 1, 2023, Baltimore City's police department is a City agency, however City Council is still powerless to legislate much-needed reforms to the BPD.

We still don't have local control - the General Assembly has to pass [SB758/HB853](#) (Sen. Carter/Del. Smith are the sponsors) to remove one line in the City Charter which prohibits the City Council from infringing on the power of the Police Commissioner.

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. The people's will, clearly expressed in the last election, must be carried out immediately by passing SB758/HB853, which will restore legislative authority to our City Council on June 1, 2023.

Local control is the best first step we have to increase police accountability to Baltimore citizens and reduce cases of police misconduct and brutality. I believe in this issue strongly, and spent the better part of four days knocking on doors in Baltimore this fall to get out the word about the ballot initiative.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **favorably on Baltimore City – Control Over Powers of Police Commissioner HB0853.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Christina Nemphos
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Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore