

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

This testimony is being submitted by 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 working in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs and the Maryland Coalition for Police Justice and Accountability. I am a resident of District 8. **I am testifying in support of SB621.**



Showing Up for Racial Justice

This bill would amend 2021's HB640 to clarify that counties may invest their police accountability board (PAB) with investigatory powers.

As a community member, I value transparency in government operations. PABs' purpose is to ensure that misconduct complaints from community members are examined fairly and transparently by an independent and impartial party. Can the PAB and its administrative charging committee be truly independent if all information is provided by the police department whose members are being investigated? We believe not. The General Assembly has previously agreed on the importance, as seen in research and best practices, of independent investigation: in creating Baltimore's Civilian Review Board, the legislature granted that body the ability to gather evidence in pursuit of its mission.

One of the problems cited by the largest in-depth investigation of the Gun Trace Task Force scandal was Internal Affairs' failure- for various reasons- to conduct adequate investigations into misconduct allegations; a systemic failure that the investigation found actually contributed to the culture of corruption in the department.¹ A PAB with investigatory powers can be a powerful tool in the arsenal of counties struggling to establish a good police accountability system. Please ensure that the counties have the ability to utilize that tool.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of SB621.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Arielle Juberg
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Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

¹ The Steptoe report, pages 479-482. Accessed at <https://www.steptoe.com/a/web/219380/3ZF1Gi/gttf-report.pdf> on 2/16/24.