



NAACP

Maryland
STATE CONFERENCE

February 27, 2024

Judiciary
Maryland General Assembly
Annapolis, Maryland

Re: HB 15 – Police Discipline - Order to Show Cause

Members of the Committee,

I write to you today as the Executive Director of the Maryland NAACP to strongly oppose HB 15, which proposes authorizing a police officer denied a certain right to seek recourse through the circuit court. While the intent may seem benign, this bill threatens to reintroduce harmful provisions reminiscent of the officer bill of rights, undermining the progress made in police accountability and equity.

The state of Maryland has long grappled with issues of police accountability and the protection of civil rights, particularly within communities of color. Passage of some provisions in the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights (LEOBR) was a significant setback, shielding officers from accountability and perpetuating a culture of impunity. Over the years, grassroots movements and advocacy efforts have worked tirelessly to dismantle these barriers and ensure justice for all Marylanders.

HB 15 threatens to reverse this progress by providing an avenue for officers to challenge denials of certain rights, effectively resurrecting aspects of the LEOBR that have disproportionately harmed marginalized communities. By granting officers greater latitude to contest disciplinary actions, this bill perpetuates a system that prioritizes the interests of law enforcement over the rights and safety of the communities they serve.

Moreover, the racial impact of HB 15 cannot be overstated. Historically, communities of color have borne the brunt of police misconduct and brutality, facing systemic injustices that have eroded trust in law enforcement. Allowing officers expanded rights to challenge disciplinary measures exacerbates this disparity, further disenfranchising communities already marginalized by biased policing practices.

It is imperative that we continue to move away from the oppressive framework of the LEOBR and towards a system that prioritizes transparency, accountability, and justice. Instead of bolstering the rights of law enforcement at the expense of the public, we must enact reforms that promote equity and safeguard the civil liberties of all Marylanders.

In conclusion, I urge you to reject HB 15 and uphold our collective commitment to progress and equity. The Maryland NAACP stands ready to work with you in pursuit of meaningful reform that advances justice for all.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

In Service,

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