

Wednesday, February 5, 2025



## Showing Up for Racial Justice

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I am submitting this testimony as a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to mobilize white people in a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with Campaign for Justice, Safety, & Jobs (CJSJ). I am a resident of Baltimore City. I am testifying in **opposition** to **HB0238 / SB0533: Public Safety - Police Accountability - Time Limit for Filing Administrative Charges**.

This bill stipulates that if an allegation of police misconduct “is related to activity that reasonably appears to be the subject of a criminal investigation,” the “year and a day” period in which the law enforcement and Administrative Charging Committee conduct their investigation of the misconduct does not begin until the “the final disposition of all criminal charges.” This would alter the deadline for the completion of the PIB review process by delaying that process to an unreasonable degree – perhaps even indefinitely – as criminal charges can take months or years to play out.

Further, the sole determiner of whether misconduct “reasonably appears” related to a criminal investigation is the law enforcement agency whose officers are under investigation, giving the agency the power to delay any civilian investigation of the alleged misconduct if it suits them.

Ensuring timely investigations of alleged officer misconduct is critical both to preserving officer morale as well as building and maintaining community trust and accountability. The vague language in HB0238 / SB0533 is far too broad and creates the potential for abuse if certain cases deemed “related” to complaints of alleged police misconduct are deliberately stalled or placed on the stet docket.

This bill could also potentially hurt police officers if they are falsely accused of misconduct and the complaint is “related” to a criminal case, as they would be stuck in limbo with no way to remove or resolve the complaint.

Despite the bill’s name, HB0238 / SB0533 does not promote or protect public safety. It would, in fact, delay police accountability and discourage public trust in law enforcement. It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to **oppose HB0238 / SB0533: Public Safety - Police Accountability - Time Limit for Filing Administrative Charges.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Katherine Blaha  
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