

Dear **Members of the Judiciary Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted alongside my friends in 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. I am also submitting this testimony in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs. I am a resident of **District 46**, a community association board member and antiracism chair, and workforce development professional. I am dedicated to a safe and prosperous Baltimore with a police department accountable to the public that the public can trust. **I am testifying in support of HB0186 - Trial Board Composition.**

Under 2021's landmark reform of police discipline, officers who refuse discipline after a finding by the Administrative Charging Committee that they committed misconduct are entitled to a hearing before a trial board. This trial board is made up of one police officer of the accused officer's rank, one civilian appointed by the Police Accountability Board, and one active or retired administrative law judge. While the decision to make one of the civilian appointees an administrative law judge was a considered one, it has unfortunately made it difficult for some counties to find sufficient candidates to staff their trial boards. This inhibits the ability of the trial boards to hold hearings in a timely manner.

HB0186 would seek to repair this problem by opening the administrative law judge slot to attorneys who are qualified to be administrative law judges, even if they have not served as such. In other words, attorneys who are US citizens living in the county whose PAB is overseeing the trial board, registered to vote, at least 30 years of age, have been residents of Maryland for at least 5 years, and are admitted to practice law in Maryland. Even if they have not acted as an administrative law judge, an attorney who meets these qualifications will have the knowledge necessary to act as chair, rule on motions, and author the written decision of the board. These attorneys would, like any other person appointed to the trial board, undergo the training set forth by the Maryland Police Standards and Training Commission. By opening this position to more candidates, HB0186 would allow trial boards to be appropriately staffed and ensure that accused police officers - and the public - see a resolution to misconduct complaints in a timely manner.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of HB0186 - Trial Board Composition.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Preston Ford

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