

HB0836_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
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Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703-7134

TESTIMONY ON HB#0836 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

County Police Accountability Boards - Investigation of Complaints of Police Misconduct

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#0836, County Police Accountability Boards - Investigation of Complaints of Police Misconduct

After multiple reports of police misconduct over the last few years the Maryland General Assembly mandated every county to create a Police Accountability Board. However, the board's powers to investigate complaints and use subpoena powers in that investigation were not granted by the new law. As such, it is still police agencies investigating police. The confidence level from the public that said investigation will be thorough and results visible is not present as these boards are currently established.

This bill will increase public confidence by giving to those Police Accountability Boards much broader powers. They will now have the discretion to exercise investigatory and subpoena power concurrently with a law enforcement agency investigating the complaint. It will increase transparency in the processing of police misconduct allegations. This bill aims to transform PABs from advisory boards to accountability boards, providing them with the necessary tools to conduct investigations free from interference.

The idea behind the establishment of the Police Accountability Boards was to make law enforcement accountable for any misconduct by a peace officer. This bill strengthens that idea by giving those boards powers to do an effective and complete job on any investigation.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB0836.