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MAYOR

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HB0139

February 25, 2025

TO: Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 139 – Public Safety - Police Accountability - Deadline for Completion of Investigation

POSITION: Support with Amendments

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 139 - Public Safety - Police Accountability - Deadline for Completion of Investigation **with amendments**.

HB 139 amends the Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 to require that the investigating unit of a relevant law enforcement agency (LEA) tasked with reviewing a complaint of police misconduct must complete its review and submit all files relating to the investigation as soon as possible, but no later than nine (9) months from the filing of the complaint. This bill would further divide the existing one (1) year and one (1) day timeline for the completion of complaints of police misconduct to encompass nine months for the LEA's investigative unit to review the complaint and 30 days for the local Administrative Charging Committee (ACC) to review the investigation and make a determination whether to administratively charge the officer.

Currently, the law stipulates that the ACC must complete its review of investigations within 30 days of receipt and no later than one year and one day from the day the complaint was lodged. Conversely, the LEA investigative units are not provided a time limit for completing their review and forwarding materials to the ACC outside of the full one year and one day deadline for the complaint. As a result, finished investigatory case files have been received by local ACCs, at times, with only days or hours to spare. This undermines the intent of the enabling legislation and places an undue burden on the ACC when meaningfully reviewing complaints of police misconduct. Timely access to these files is essential for the ACC to effectively exercise its full legal authority, including reviewing cases, requesting additional information, developing facts further, or issuing subpoenas. Therefore, ACCs must not be hindered by time constraints where members have not been provided time for adequate review as outlined by the law. HB 139 would provide LEAs a time limit for completing investigations of police misconduct as well as the existing deadline for the completion of the ACC review of investigations. It would also ensure that both the investigatory body of the LEAs and the ACC adhere to the one year and one day deadline for all complaints and prevent instances where complaints go unresolved.

However, in order to ensure that both LEAs and ACCs have adequate time to investigate and review complaints, the BCA recommends amending the bill to extend the overall one year and one day timeline for all complaints to

provide LEAs with one year to investigate and ACCs 90 days to review investigations, as opposed to the existing 30 days.

For the above stated reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable with amendments** committee report on HB 139.