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Judiciary Committee  
100 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Thursday, February 20, 2025

## HB0255 – No-Knock Warrants

Position: **FAVORABLE**

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and Esteemed Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Ronnie L. Taylor, and I serve as the Advocacy, Policy, & Partnerships Director at FreeState Justice, a nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing legal and systemic inequities affecting Maryland's LGBTQIA+ community. I am here to testify in strong support of **HB0255**, which seeks to repeal the authority for the issuance and execution of no-knock search warrants in Maryland.

**HB0255** addresses the critical issue of no-knock warrants, which allow law enforcement officers to enter premises without prior notification. These warrants have been associated with significant risks, including the potential for violent confrontations, loss of life, and erosion of community trust in law enforcement. Notably, marginalized communities, including LGBTQIA+ individuals and people of color, disproportionately bear the negative impacts of such practices.

The repeal of no-knock warrants as proposed in **HB0255** is a necessary step toward enhancing public safety and restoring community trust. Data from the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services indicates that in 2022, 59 no-knock search warrants were issued in Maryland. The use of these warrants has been linked to tragic outcomes, such as the death of Breonna Taylor in Kentucky, underscoring the potential dangers inherent in unannounced police entries.

For the LGBTQIA+ community, interactions with law enforcement are often fraught with discrimination and bias. Studies have shown that LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to experience police searches, detainment, or arrest, and are less willing to call the police for help in the future. The use of no-

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knock warrants exacerbates these issues, fostering fear and mistrust among LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly those of color.

By repealing the authority to issue and execute no-knock warrants, **HB0255** aims to:

1. **Enhance Safety:** Reducing the likelihood of violent confrontations during unannounced entries protects both civilians and law enforcement officers.
2. **Promote Accountability:** Ensuring that law enforcement operations are conducted with transparency and respect for civil liberties fosters greater accountability.
3. **Restore Community Trust:** Eliminating practices that disproportionately impact marginalized communities is essential for rebuilding trust between law enforcement and the public.

In closing, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report for **HB0255**. This legislation not only addresses a critical gap in our public safety framework but also reinforces Maryland's commitment to equity and justice for all its residents.

Best,

*Ronnie L. Taylor*

Ronnie L. Taylor

**Sources:**

1. [\*PS §§ 3-508\(e\) and 3-525\(e\); GOCPP; 2023 Report on SWAT Team Deployment and No-Knock Search Warrants\*](#)
2. [\*New Report Finds Harassment & Mistreatment Fuels Mistrust Among LGBTQ People Towards Police / American Civil Liberties Union\*](#)
3. [\*After Breonna Taylor's death, activists fought to ban surprise police raids. One year later, they're winning / Breonna Taylor / The Guardian\*](#)