

Testimony on Senate Bill 854 – Favorable - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Restrictions

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Linda Girdner and I am a resident of Gambrills, MD. I am writing in **support of SB854 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers – Restrictions.**

My mother grew up in Nazi Germany. As a child she saw Nazi officers kidnap and beat people on the street. How did those officers know the people were Jewish? Because Jews were required to wear a Star of David. In the United States of America in 2026, the color of one's skin is the equivalent. It does not convey citizenship or lack thereof. It does not convey criminal record, gang membership or lack thereof. ICE and CBP use racial profiling to determine whom to harass, kidnap, and attack, because this administration wants to get rid of Black and brown people. That is a flagrant violation of decency, the rule of law, and true Christian values (not those of White Christian Nationalists.) This is out of control authoritarianism. And you have some power to do something about it in Maryland.

This would not only apply to federal officers, but all law enforcement officers. We know that traffic stops and other actions by our own officers sometimes involve racial profiling. Let's put resident safety and dignity ahead of racist discriminatory actions. It will make Maryland a better place for all of us.

This bill seeks to ensure we keep existing constitutional protections and limit federal abuses. It (1) Codifies existing constitutional protections against racial profiling through language explicitly forbidding racial profiling by law enforcement; (2) Makes clear that federal agents seeking to rely on Maryland law as a basis for their activities are subject to the same Maryland standards as state and local law enforcement; and (3) Ensures these rights are enforceable through a private cause of action. We need this bill. Without clear state-level protections, federal rulings can weaken how our rights are protected in Maryland.

Please move SB854 forward with a favorable vote in committee and on the floor.

Thank you for your consideration.

Linda Girdner

Member, Showing Up for Racial Justice Annapolis and Anne Arundel County