

Testimony for Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee
Tuesday, March 31, 2026
HB0336 – Criminal Procedure – District Court – Issuance of Summonses
& Arrest Warrants
FAVORABLE

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and committee members:

My name is Beverly John. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of my family and community. I am a concerned community member, as well as a member of the Maryland Coalition for Justice and Police Accountability and the Prince George's County Coalition for Police Accountability.

I am offering my continued support and testimony for this legislation. As stated in previous years, my daughter was victimized by the lack of guardrails within the current system and was falsely charged by a stranger who was jealous of her relationship. There was no investigation into the incredible allegations. The State's Attorney did not prosecute nor look into the false evidence presented by this woman. She was not held accountable for the perjury she committed. We have heard that perjury is hard to prove. That may be true, but you certainly can't prove it if you don't even investigate it.

We support HB0336 because community members need protection from others who weaponize the District Court Commissioner system maliciously. Some residents are fully aware of the ability to use a Commissioner in this way. The SA's office will frequently decide to not prosecute cases, but even when they do not move forward with prosecuting a case, extreme damage to the defendant's life has already been done. People have been incarcerated and have lost jobs and families while defending against false accusations. The financial burden of hiring an attorney, if you are fortunate enough to hire a private attorney, is devastating. The emotional and psychological stress is damaging, as well. One hour, one day - Any amount of time is traumatizing for an innocent person.

This legislation, if passed, would strengthen current legislation. Complainants would still be able to report incidents with the Commissioners. However, it is our hope that if a complainant understands that charges can only be made by law enforcement or the state's attorney, it may deter someone from filing false statements. Currently, too many people are filing false charges with no fear of accountability. This legislation is a first step in addressing this problem. It would allow the state's attorney's office to focus on prosecuting legitimate cases and working to resolve cases for those who deserve justice.

Therefore, we urge a "Favorable" vote on HB0336.

Thank you.