



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 835  
Before the House Judiciary Committee  
Submitted February 20, 2026**

**Submitted by:**

Robert Landau  
Silver Spring Justice Coalition  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

The Silver Spring Justice Coalition (SSJC) is a coalition of community members, faith groups, and civil and human rights organizations from throughout Montgomery County committed to eliminating harm caused by police and empowering those communities most affected by policing. In furtherance of this goal, we urge you to support HB 835, which will ban the use of no-knock warrants.

We have all heard and seen horror stories about no-knock warrants gone bad. Breonna Taylor is just one of many of the Black community lost to no-knock warrants gone awry. As noted by the Legal Defense Fund:

We know many examples of police executing no-knock raids at wrong addresses, such as the raid that resulted in seven-year-old Aiyana Stanley-Jones' death. We know of police throwing a flashbang and grievously injuring an 18-month-old toddler known as "Bou Bou" by his family. We know that plain-clothes law enforcement officers forcefully entered 92-year-old Kathryn Johnston's residence in a no-knock raid, and, when she fired one shot that did not strike any officer, police shot at her 39 times, killing her.<sup>1</sup>

In 2019, a no-knock warrant executed by Montgomery County police injured a firefighter of color, his wife and child - none of whom was the subject of the warrant. The error led to a lawsuit against the county for \$2.5 million.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.naacpldf.org/end-no-knock-warrants/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/no-knock-warrant-lawsuit/2021/05/05/833b8e3a-adc9-11eb-acd3-24b44a57093a\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/no-knock-warrant-lawsuit/2021/05/05/833b8e3a-adc9-11eb-acd3-24b44a57093a_story.html)

Given that no-knock warrants are among the most dangerous and hazardous police activities,<sup>3</sup> it is surprising to many that they are usually granted by magistrates and judges simply on an officer's say so. Moreover, given the current legal standards, officers need to say little to justify the grant of a no-knock warrant, and as a result, they are used far too frequently. As reported by the Washington Post:

. . . judges generally rely on the word of police officers and rarely question the merits of the requests, offering little resistance when they seek authorization for no-knocks, a Washington Post investigation has found. The searches, which were meant to be used sparingly, have become commonplace for drug squads and SWAT teams.<sup>4</sup>

Not only are no-knock warrants dangerous, but some data suggests there are significant racial disparities in the use of no-knock warrants. The Center for Criminal Justice states: “[police raids may be racially disparate](#); in one study, 42% of households raided under SWAT search warrants had Black occupants.”<sup>5</sup>

We observed that the [bill's 2025 DLS Racial Equity Impact Note](#) indicated that Montgomery County is tied with Baltimore County for the most no-knock warrants with 14 in 2023. Montgomery County Police have a well-documented history of having disproportionate impact against Black and Brown people when it involves use of force and traffic stops. That correlation cannot be a one-time occurrence. The bill's 2025 DLS REI Note indicates that the bill would have a positive impact on Black people.<sup>6</sup> The General Assembly should eliminate this unnecessary policing tool that appears to be racially discriminatory.<sup>7</sup>

The argument that no-knock warrants are needed to surprise and subdue dangerous people is a false self-fulfilling prophecy. Of course, people who have guns — sometimes legally — are likely to defend themselves when they think that criminals are breaking into their homes. The opponents' argument that no-knock warrants have, in some cases, yielded valuable evidence or led to the capture of criminals misses the point. The real question is whether the same results were not possible with a warrant that requires law enforcement to announce themselves and wait 20 seconds before entering. This bill's ounce of prevention could prevent many unnecessary deaths and injuries.

---

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/2022/04/06/no-knock-warrants/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/interactive/2022/no-knock-warrants-judges/>

<sup>5</sup><https://counciloncj.foleon.com/policing/assessing-the-evidence/iii-no-knock-warrants-and-police-raids>

<sup>6</sup> <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/Pubs/BudgetFiscal/2025RS-HB0255-REIN.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> See also, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2020/12/01/louisville-police-no-knock-warrants-mostly-targeted-black-residents/6456241002/>

A Google search for settlements of wrongful no-knock warrants yields a long litany of high-dollar settlements that cost taxpayers millions.<sup>8</sup> No-knock warrants are too susceptible to fatal errors, and their results are not worth the risks.

The 2025 DLS Note points out that six other states, including Virginia, have prohibited no-knock warrants. Maryland should follow those enlightened states.

No-knock warrants are not worth the danger they pose to innocent civilians or law enforcement officers. Think about it: Officers don't need no-knock warrants to seize thousands of fentanyl pills, or kilos of illegal drugs. Those quantities can't be destroyed when police serve a regular warrant. Nor are no-knock warrants needed to seize guns or other contraband. The no-knock warrant is obsolete, and it has been so abused, particularly to the harm of people of color, that attempting to reform the process short of its elimination is futile.

The only solution is to pass this bill. We urge a favorable report.

---

<sup>8</sup>[https://www.google.com/search?q=settlements+of+improper+no-knock+warrants&rlz=1C5CHFA\\_enUS1023US1032&oq=settlements+of+improper+no-knock+warrants&gs\\_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAFFUYOTIHCAEQIRigATIHCAIQIRigATIHCAEQIRigAdIBCTI4MDI1ajBqNKgCALACAQ&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=settlements+of+improper+no-knock+warrants&rlz=1C5CHFA_enUS1023US1032&oq=settlements+of+improper+no-knock+warrants&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAFFUYOTIHCAEQIRigATIHCAIQIRigATIHCAEQIRigAdIBCTI4MDI1ajBqNKgCALACAQ&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)