

Testimony on House Bill 1262 – Favorable
HB 1262: Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Restrictions

House Judiciary Committee

March 5, 2026

Honorable Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Carolyn Mitchell**, and I am a **resident of Annapolis, Maryland**. I am writing in support of **HB 1262: Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Restrictions**, which seeks to codify existing constitutional protections against racial profiling by explicitly forbidding law enforcement from racial profiling.

Racial profiling violates the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments and undermines public safety and community trust in our state. Racial profiling by law enforcement remains a persistent issue in Maryland. Black Marylanders are consistently stopped at disproportionately higher rates than white drivers. Among those stopped, Black drivers are less likely to receive a warning, more likely to receive a citation and more likely to be arrested. Moreover, for over a year, federal agents have been acting lawlessly across American cities by violating existing protections, racially profiling residents, and committing abuses without consequence. We must ban law enforcement from targeting someone based on that person's perceived or actual race, ethnicity, or nationality, rather than evidence of illegality.

This is so important. Having recently read “The New Jim Crow” by Michelle Alexander I am stunned that at every turn the white supremacists in this nation have undermined every protection afforded by the Constitution leaving no recourse but to codify against racial profiling very clearly with no room for racist interpretation in favor of those who for reasons that I cannot begin to fathom choose to treat fellow human beings with such hostility. I am very proud that Maryland is taking this step in the face of recent acceleration of the racist and lawless proclivities of our society. I feel nothing so strongly as the this: we must ensure that we do everything to protect Marylanders from this kind of treatment. Every Maryland deserved to feel protected by the law and fellow citizens. Let's make sure that they do by passing this bill!

The Supreme Court has indicated a desire to erode our constitutional protections against racial profiling, greenlighting practices in California long considered to be violations of the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments. Maryland must act now to ensure existing protections against racial profiling are not eroded here. Racial profiling does not make our communities safer. We must make it clear that when any law enforcement officer is using Maryland law in enforcement, they are bound by our state laws. Federal, state, and local law enforcement must be held accountable when they violate our rights.

Overtly prohibiting racial profile will lead us back toward a system we can believe in. The manipulations and evasions of the courts in facilitating racial injustice is so profoundly

undermining of our founding documents. It is critical that we recognize the hypocrisy and rectify it with clear counter measures. This is a battle for the soul of this nation and what better place to start than Maryland – our small but mighty bastion of civilization.

The legislature has the power to protect Marylanders from being racially profiled and limit abuses by law enforcement. This moment calls for every one of us to have courage in the wake of this lawless administration. For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on HB 1262.

Thank you for your time and consideration.