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Testimony from:

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In SUPPORT of House Bill 1392, “Public Safety - Law Enforcement - Quotas (Community-Oriented Policing Act).”

March 10, 2026

House Judiciary Committee

Chairwoman Bartlett and members of the committee,

My name is Jillian E. Snider, and I am a resident senior fellow of criminal justice and civil liberties at the R Street Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan, public policy research organization. Our mission is to engage in policy research and outreach to promote free markets and limited, effective government in many areas, including the criminal justice system. That is why today’s hearing is of special interest to us.

In addition to my current role, I am also a Lecturer at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and a retired police officer from the New York City Police Department. As someone who has dedicated her life to public safety and the rule of law, I recognize that how we enforce laws matter just as much as the laws themselves. Given R Street’s commitment to pragmatic policies that improve community safety, efficiency, and government accountability, we have a strong interest in House Bill 1392, the Community-Oriented Policing Act.

We support this bipartisan legislation that seeks to prohibit the use of quotas within law enforcement agencies because it addresses critical concerns regarding constitutional rights, the integrity of policing practices, and the overarching goal of fostering genuine community engagement to enhance public safety.

As someone who worked a majority of their career as a police officer, I firmly believe in holding individuals accountable for criminal behavior. Law enforcement must be empowered to address threats to public safety effectively. However, I also know from experience that quota-driven policing is not the right way to do it. Effective policing is about problem-solving, community engagement, and strategic interventions—not simply generating numbers to meet arbitrary targets.

The imposition of quotas on law enforcement officers raises significant constitutional issues. Quotas can lead to capricious stops, searches, and citations, potentially infringing upon citizens’ Fourth Amendment

rights.<sup>1</sup> When officers are mandated to meet specific numerical targets, there is an inherent risk of prioritizing quantity over the quality and legitimacy of stops. This practice undermines the foundational principle that law enforcement actions must be based on individualized reasonable suspicion and probable cause, not on fulfilling predetermined numerical goals.

During my tenure with the NYPD, I saw firsthand how quota-driven policies impacted officer discretion. Officers were often pressured to issue a certain number of summonses, make a specified number of stops, or effect a minimum number of arrests even if they did not believe those actions were absolutely necessary.<sup>2</sup> This led to situations where individuals were stopped for minor infractions simply to meet quotas, rather than because they posed any real threat to public safety. In some cases, officers faced disciplinary action for failing to meet these arbitrary targets, creating an environment where policing became more about numbers than community trust.<sup>3</sup>

Mandating quotas compels officers to engage in stops and issue citations they might not otherwise deem necessary. This undermines an officer's capacity to make informed decisions on the street, and more importantly, diverts attention from pressing public safety concerns as numerical targets take precedence over professional judgment. Research has found that officers subject to arrest and citation quotas have lower clearance rates for violent crimes, as quota-driven enforcement incentivizes activities that can be completed quickly rather than devoting time to investigating complex cases that significantly impact public safety.<sup>4</sup> Such practices can erode trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve, as policing becomes perceived as revenue-driven rather than focused on genuine safety concerns. This compromises the future of law enforcement investigations, case clearances, and willing participation in community members to help in a collaborative effort to fight crime.<sup>5</sup> Police agencies across Maryland are already contending with significant staffing shortages. Most recent reports show that Baltimore City is short over 500 officers from its authorized force, Baltimore County has over 200 vacancies, and smaller jurisdictions struggle to compete for applicants.<sup>6</sup> Imposing quotas on already-stretched departments risks pulling the limited patrol personnel that remain away from proactive, community-oriented work and toward low-value enforcement activity that may not address violent crime.

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<sup>1</sup> United States Court, "What Does the Fourth Amendment Mean?," Last accessed February 20, 2025. <https://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/educational-resources/about-educational-outreach/activity-resources/what-does-fourth-amendment-mean#:~:text=The%20Constitution%2C%20through%20the%20Fourth,deemed%20unreasonable%20under%20the%20law>

<sup>2</sup> Jennifer Gonnerman, "Officer Serrano's Hidden Camera," *New York Magazine*, May 17, 2013. <https://nymag.com/news/features/pedro-serrano-2013-5/index3.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Carimah Townes, "NYPD Officers Sue Saying They're Being Punished For Refusing to Discriminate," *Think Progress*, September 2, 2015. <https://thinkprogress.org/nypd-officers-sue-saying-theyre-being-punished-for-refusing-to-discriminate-e2eab2f93ce1/>.

<sup>4</sup> Jackie Fielding, "Outlawing Police Quotas," Brennan Center for Justice, July 13, 2022. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/outlawing-police-quotas>.

<sup>5</sup> Jillian Snider, "Solving Crime, Protecting Communities: A Blueprint for Safer Streets," R Street Institute, June 17, 2025. <https://www.rstreet.org/research/solving-crime-protecting-communities-a-blueprint-for-safer-streets>.

<sup>6</sup> Henry J. Brown, "It's police recruitment season, but filling vacancies is a struggle across Maryland," *Maryland Matters*, May 22, 2024. <https://marylandmatters.org/2024/05/22/its-police-recruitment-season-but-filling-vacancies-is-a-struggle-across-maryland>.

While existing research found minimal evidence that such laws restricting the use of police quotas reduce coercive behavior by the police, it has indicated that restrictions on quotas may improve the quality of traffic stops and vehicle searches. This suggests that eliminating quotas allows officers to focus on more substantive law enforcement activities, enhancing overall effectiveness.<sup>7</sup>

Quotas often drive over-enforcement of low-level offenses. While these types of violations need to be addressed, this does not necessarily address public safety concerns. Emphasizing minor infractions can lead to the criminalization of behaviors that pose minimal risk. This approach can strain judicial resources and detract from addressing more serious crimes. Research has shown that police quotas can lead to unnecessary stops and arrests for minor offenses, diverting resources from more serious public safety threats, which ultimately does not make communities safer and can undermine public trust in law enforcement.<sup>8</sup>

The bipartisan nature of this bill underscores a collective commitment to uphold constitutional rights and promote effective policing. Similar legislative efforts across various states reflect a growing consensus on this issue. State lawmakers across the nation are making legislative changes to discourage the practice of law enforcement agencies pressuring officers to participate in ticket quotas, which signifies a unified recognition of the detrimental effects quotas have on both law enforcement officers and community relations.<sup>9</sup>

The enforcement of quotas within law enforcement agencies poses constitutional challenges, undermines the discretionary judgment of officers, and detracts from holistic measures of policing success. House Bill 1392 takes a decisive step toward preserving constitutional rights, enhancing public safety, and fostering genuine trust between law enforcement and the communities they are sworn to protect.

I urge the committee to grant this legislation a favorable report and take a critical step toward a more transparent and fair system of policing. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you,

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<sup>7</sup> Griffin Edwards and Stephen Rushin, "The Effect of Police Quota Laws," *Iowa Law Review* 109: 5, (July 2024), pp. 2127-2184. <https://ilr.law.uiowa.edu/sites/ilr.law.uiowa.edu/files/2024-07/ILR-109-Edwards-Rushin.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Jackie Fields, "Outlawing Police Quotas," Brennan Center for Justice, July 13, 2022. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/outlawing-police-quotas>.

<sup>9</sup> Keith Goble, "States consider legislation to address ticket quotas," *Landline*, March 27, 2025. <https://landline.media/states-consider-legislation-to-address-ticket-quotas>.