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TESTIMONY ON HB#1309- POSITION: FAVORABLE

**Commission to Review and Assess Racial Disparities in the State Criminal Justice System -
Establishment**

TO: Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#1309, **Commission to Review and Assess Racial Disparities in the State Criminal Justice System – Establishment**

Racial disparities in Maryland's criminal justice system are stark, with Black residents significantly overrepresented at every stage despite making up only 30% of the population. Black people account for 51% of arrests, 59% of jail, and 71% of prison populations. These disparities are even higher in juvenile detention and Baltimore city, driven by systemic issues and over-policing.¹

Key Aspects of Racial Disparities in Maryland

- Incarceration Rates
- Arrests and Jail
- Juvenile Justice
- Probation and Parole
- Systemic Factors

These known disparities must, in the interest of justice, be remediated. This bill provides a path to achieving that goal.

This bill will work to meet the moment by establishing the Commission to Review and Assess Racial Disparities in the State Criminal Justice System to study and make recommendations on certain matters involving the disparate treatment of African Americans, Hispanics, and other non-White individuals in the State's criminal justice system and other criminal justice issues in the State; and requiring the Commission to submit a final report of its findings and recommendations on or before September 1, 2028.

That report will create the path Maryland can and should implement to resolve any of the findings and recommendations that report contains.

I respectfully urge this committee to return an favorable report on HB#1309.

¹ Google AI Search "Racial Disparities in the Maryland Criminal Justice System"