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Date: March 5th, 2026

Re: HB 1262: Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Restrictions

Position: SUPPORT

To: The Maryland House Judiciary Committee

Distinguished Members of the Committee,

My name is Debbie Ramsey and I am a retired detective, having served 12 years with the Baltimore Police Department. I represent myself as a law enforcement professional and as a speaker for the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP). Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 1262, which would officially define and prohibit racial profiling by all law enforcement operating in Maryland. I support this bill because it reinforces constitutional policing and strengthens public trust, both of which are essential to public safety.

LEAP is an international nonprofit group of police, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice professionals who speak from firsthand experience serving in the justice system. Our mission is to make our nation safer by focusing law enforcement resources on the greatest threats to public safety, addressing the root causes of crime, and working toward healing police-community relations.

Every law enforcement official in Maryland swears an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of this state. This commits us to protecting individual rights while carrying out our duties. When those rights are violated, it is our responsibility to speak plainly about it.

Many of us are concerned by video evidence of federal immigration agents targeting people based on their perceived race or ethnicity, in apparent violation of the Fourth Amendment. This sort of racial profiling violates the Fourth Amendment's protection against unreasonable searches and seizures because it substitutes bias and generalized suspicion for individualized, fact-based reasonable suspicion.

LawEnforcementActionPartnership.org

Formerly known as Law Enforcement Against Prohibition

Stopping, searching, or detaining someone based on race or perceived ethnicity is both unconstitutional and antithetical to effective policing.

Beyond its legal flaws, racial profiling damages the community trust and legitimacy law enforcement depends on to do its job. As law enforcement professionals, we know that we are only as strong as our relationships with the public. Systemwide, the research underscores that having trust from the people we serve [directly impacts public safety](#). We can only prevent, detect, and solve crime if witnesses and victims are willing to come forward to report criminal activity and work with us to address it. For this to happen, the public must have confidence that police are enforcing the law fairly and in ways that are consistent with public safety.

When law enforcement targets people based on the color of their skin, the public loses faith that law enforcement – as an entire institution – is genuinely focused on public safety and bound to constitutional standards. Racial profiling also destroys police-community trust where we most desperately need it – in communities of color. [Research](#) has consistently shown that [Black](#) and [Latino Americans](#) believe police do not treat them equally, and disproportionately subject them to unconstitutional stops or searches. As a result, they are [more likely to report avoiding contact with law enforcement](#).

HB 1262 marks an important step toward ensuring constitutional protections and limiting federal abuses. By defining racial profiling and explicitly prohibiting the practice, the bill sets law enforcement standards that apply consistently to all officers operating in Maryland, including federal agents. No officer should be above the constitutional protections we are sworn to uphold.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my law enforcement perspective in support of SB 1262. I appreciate the committee's consideration of this important legislation.

Respectfully,

Detective Debbie Ramsey (Ret.)
Baltimore Police Department
Speaker, Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP)