



Regarding House Bill 1262 – Favorable
Submitted by Birgit Sharp, 3/3/2026

This testimony is being submitted on behalf of CANDLE.¹ We stand resolutely in favor of the **HB1262 Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers Restrictions Act**. Recent federal actions are weakening protections against racial profiling. It is vital to ensure that Maryland is able to keep existing constitutional protections against Maryland law enforcement's use of racial profiling and to limit federal abuses.

We support this bill for three reasons.

First: This bill codifies and protects US Constitutional (Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments) rights when Maryland police are enforcing laws, and it limits federal abuse.

- Racial profiling is on the rise, nationwide, due to the Supreme Court decision in *Noem v. Vasquez Perdomo*.² Federal officers are profiling on the basis of race in states across the country, including ours.
- Close to half of Maryland residents are people of color.³ This bill is a necessary protection to keep our residents from being illegally harassed and arrested. This is particularly important in cases that may funnel into immigration enforcement, as these cases often deny due process prior to detention. This leaves people vulnerable to false arrest and transfer to ICE detention.
- By making racial profiling illegal for law enforcement in Maryland, this bill protects Marylanders from such racial profiling by State and local police, independent of the federal government's weakening of our protections. It is important that this applies to State officials even when they are working with or for the federal government.
- It is also essential to ensure that, whenever federal law enforcement agents enforce Maryland law, their activities conform to the same standards which apply to our city, county and State law enforcement officers.

Second: This bill offers important redress to victims of racial profiling.

- This bill is enforceable by private right of action, without leaving redress to agencies that may be slow, under-resourced, or politically motivated. This gives enforcement legitimate teeth.

Third: The specific goal of law enforcement is public safety. But no one is safer when people cannot trust law enforcement to abide by the law in policy, practice and rhetoric.

- People don't report crime or support investigation where they can't trust local law enforcement;
- This mistrust extends beyond the targeted population to others in the community;
- Trust destroyed will take years if not decades to restore.

Please give HB1262 a favorable report.

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Far better to light the candle, than to curse the darkness.

1 CANDLE is the Community Action Network for Democracy, Liberties and Equality, based in Anne Arundel and Calvert counties. Our membership is close to 150 people.

2 SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES No. 25A169 KRISTI NOEM, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, ET AL. v. PEDRO VASQUEZ PERDOMO, ET AL.

https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/24pdf/25a169_5h25.pdf

3 United State Census Bureau: Maryland Population Estimates, July 1, 2024

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/MD/PST045224>

