

HB0794_Public Safety - Maryland Police Training an

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR HB0835

Public Safety - Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission - Prohibition Against Certain Affiliation or Support by Police Officers

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Acevero

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0835 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members believe that police officers should be held to the highest standards of conduct. They interface with the public every day and are charged with ensuring the safety of all residents. If they actively support extremist groups or hate groups, they cannot be counted on to ensure the safety of all residents, which means that they can't perform their duties.

This bill requires the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to prohibit officers from affiliating with, supporting, or advocating for white supremacist groups, causes, or ideologies or actively promoting an international or domestic extremist group that encourages illegal violent conduct.

Our members believe that this is a common-sense policy. However, there are no penalties for officers who violate this prohibition. We believe that there should be escalating penalties, from warnings, to counseling to loss of employment. We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report in committee.

MOPD Testimony FAVORABLE HB794.pdf

Uploaded by: Kirsten Downs

Position: FAV



NATASHA DARTIGUE
PUBLIC DEFENDER

KEITH LOTRIDGE
DEPUTY PUBLIC DEFENDER

ELIZABETH HILLIARD
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

BILL: House Bill 794 – Public Safety – Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission – Prohibition Against Certain Affiliation or Support by Police Officers

FROM: Maryland Office of the Public Defender

POSITION: FAVORABLE

DATE: February 24, 2026

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 794. This legislation mandates that the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission implement regulations prohibiting law enforcement officers from affiliating with, supporting, or advocating for white supremacist groups, causes, or ideologies, and from participating in or actively promoting any international or domestic extremist group that the Federal Bureau of Investigation has determined supports or encourages illegal violent conduct. This is a necessary step to ensure public safety, rebuild trust between law enforcement and communities—particularly Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC)—and address long-standing racial disparities in policing.

Public safety depends on trust—trust that officers enforce the law without bias, without allegiance to extremist ideologies, and without undermining the rights of Maryland’s diverse communities. When officers maintain ties to white supremacist organizations, it creates a climate of fear, increases racial profiling, and weakens public cooperation with law enforcement. The presence of such officers threatens both community safety and the integrity of our justice system.

Racial disparities in police interactions are well-documented. Studies consistently show that Black and Brown Marylanders are disproportionately stopped, searched, arrested, and subjected to the use of force.¹ The ACLU of Maryland's *Chasing Justice* report highlights these systemic issues:

- Disproportionate Use of Force: From 2015 to 2019, 91% of Baltimore Police Department use-of-force incidents targeted Black residents, who make up only 63% of the city’s population.
- Misconduct Complaints: 1,826 officers faced complaints, yet only 8% of external complaints were sustained.

¹Maryland Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services. Maryland Use of Force Data Collection Program: Annual Report 2023. https://gocpp.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/PS-%C2%A7-3-528d_-GOCPP_-2023-Report-on-Use-of-Force-Incidents.pdf.

- Racial Bias in Complaint Outcomes: Complaints from white residents were sustained at higher rates, while complaints against Black officers were upheld more frequently, suggesting racial bias.²

These findings underscore the urgent need to prevent officers from affiliating with white supremacist groups, as required by House Bill 794. The presence of such officers exacerbates racial disparities, fuels distrust, and perpetuates systemic inequities.

By passing House Bill 794, Maryland reaffirms its commitment to an unbiased, accountable, and community-centered approach to policing. This measure will help restore public confidence, strengthen police-community relations, and ensure that all Marylanders are protected equally under the law.

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender strongly urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 794.

Submitted by: Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Government Relations Division.

Authored by: Kirsten Gettys Downs
Director of Systemic Reform
Maryland Office of the Public Defender
Kirsten.Downs@maryland.gov

² ACLU of Maryland. Chasing Justice: Addressing Police Violence and Misconduct in Maryland. August 2021. https://www.aclu-md.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/aclu-md_chasingjusticereport_aug2021.pdf.

HB0794 - Public Safety - Maryland Police Training

Uploaded by: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

Position: FAV



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TO: Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett, Chair
Delegate Debra Davis, Vice Chair
Judiciary Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
DATE: 2/24/2026
RE: HB0794 - Public Safety - Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission - Prohibition Against Certain Affiliation or Support by Police Officers

The MLLC supports HB0794 - Public Safety - Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission - Prohibition Against Certain Affiliation or Support by Police Officers

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB0794.

A common defect of the American criminal justice system is that it disproportionately impacts minority communities. One of the ways the system disproportionately impacts minorities, specifically the Latino community, is through discriminatory policing tactics based in racial profiling and xenophobic ideologies. Estimates show that a staggering 56% of Latinos have themselves had contact with the criminal justice system or have a close family member who has.¹ Additionally, Latino immigrants encountered by law enforcement may fall in the intersection of the criminal justice system and the immigration system, ultimately subjecting them to discriminatory practices prevalent in both systems.²

This bill would better protect Maryland's Latino community from discriminatory policing practices by codifying the prohibition of Maryland police officers from engaging with or supporting racist or extremist groups in any way. By requiring the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to ensure that police officers do not engage in such activities, this legislation would help build public trust toward the police. Ultimately, this bill would help to protect all communities of color from hate-based policing.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0794.

¹ [Criminal Justice Reform](#)

² [Penn Law Professor Finds "Crimmigration" Disproportionately Impacts Latinos • News & Events • Penn Carey Law](#)

Testimony in support of HB0794 - Prohibition Again

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

HB0794_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

02/24/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#/0794- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Public Safety - Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission - Prohibition Against Certain Affiliation or Support by Police Officers

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#/0794, **Public Safety - Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission - Prohibition Against Certain Affiliation or Support by Police Officers**

In an increasingly diverse population in Maryland public safety demands a higher level of trust between the population and police forces and officers. Recognizing the effects of discrimination against BIPOC (black people, indigenous people, and people of color) this bill defines “white supremacist groups, causes, or ideologies” as groups, causes, or ideologies that:

- promote white supremacy and the idea that white people are superior to BIPOC
- promote religious and racial bigotry
- seek to exacerbate racial and ethnic tensions between BIPOC and non-BIPOC
- engage in patently hateful and inflammatory speech, intimidation, and violence against BIPOC as a means of promoting white supremacy.

The bill will charge the commission to prohibit police officers from:

- affiliating with, supporting, or advocating for white supremacist groups, causes, or ideologies
- participating in or actively promoting an international or domestic extremist group that the federal bureau of investigation has determined supports or encourages illegal violent conduct.

This bill does NOT affect First Amendment rights; it simply says that certain conduct anti-ethical to good policing should prevent an individual from being granted police powers.

The bill requires the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to prohibit police officers from affiliating with, supporting, or advocating for White supremacist groups, ideologies, or causes or participating in or actively promoting a certain extremist group.

This bill implements the recommendations of the Center for Policing Equity White Paper - *WHITE SUPREMACY IN POLICING: How Law Enforcement Agencies Can Respond*¹

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0794.

¹ <https://policingequity.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/CPE-WhitePaper-WhiteSupremacy.pdf>

HB0794-MPTSC-Prohibitions on LEO Affiliations and

Uploaded by: S. Spencer Dove

Position: FAV



State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

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Candice Crenshaw

February 24, 2026

**House Bill 794 – Public Safety – Maryland Police Training
and Standards Commission – Prohibition Against
Certain Affiliation or Support by Police Officers
Position: Support**

Dear Chairperson Bartlett, Vice Chairperson Davis, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for enforcing Maryland’s laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, state contracts, commercial leasing, and health services based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, source of income, and military status.

House Bill 794 is a commonsense bill that requires the Maryland Police Training & Standards Commission to prohibit police officers from (1) affiliating with, supporting, or advocating for White supremacist groups, causes, or ideologies, or (2) participating in or actively promoting an international or domestic extremist group that the FBI has determined supports or encourages illegal violent conduct.

In 2023, the Southern Poverty Law Center¹ tracked a total of 25 hate and antigovernment groups in Maryland, 4 of which operated statewide while the other 21 were local organizations. Of these 25 groups, 3 were labeled as “General Hate”, 1 was “Anti-Immigrant”, 3 were “White Nationalist”, 1 was “Neo-Nazi”, and 1 was “Antisemitism”. Meanwhile, according to the State of Maryland 2023 Hate Bias Report issued by the Maryland State Police and the Maryland Coordination & Analysis Center², the number of hate bias incidents reported across Maryland rose from 467 in 2022 to 951 in 2023 – the highest number of incidents in the report’s 10-year snapshot. This data coincides with increased reporting by both the media and the Anti-Defamation League of White nationalist imagery and propaganda incidents reaching record highs.

In today’s climate, Marylanders need to have confidence that our law enforcement professionals are not publicly or privately engaged in any activities or affiliations that promote White supremacy or acts of terrorism against Black people,

¹ https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map/?hm_year=2023&hm_state=MD

² <https://mcac.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2023-Hate-Bias-Report.pdf>

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”

Indigenous people, and people of color. HB794 helps to give those assurances while we work collaboratively under larger initiatives to dismantle generations of systemic racism and inequity that continue to plague our justice system in America.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable vote on HB794. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. MCCR looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to promote and improve civil rights in Maryland.

HB794 FWA 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Debi Jasen

Position: FWA

Judiciary Committee
House Bill 794
Favorable with Amendment

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Judiciary Committee;

We've all seen the horrific outcomes of racist policing. While most racist law enforcement officers aren't members of white supremacist groups, many do express their bigotry in other ways. White supremacists should not be in positions of power, especially when they're armed with deadly weapons.

I'm concerned about the part of the bill that says, "PARTICIPATING IN OR ACTIVELY PROMOTING AN INTERNATIONAL OR DOMESTIC EXTREMIST GROUP THAT THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION HAS DETERMINED SUPPORTS OR ENCOURAGES ILLEGAL VIOLENT CONDUCT" since the Trump administration has decided that anyone who's against bigotry is a violent domestic terrorist, and the anti-bigotry and anti-fascism groups they're in are terrorist groups. Some wording changes may be needed to address that issue. But I wholly agree that there should be a way to filter out white supremacists.

Sincerely,
Debi Jasen
Pasadena, MD

HB 794_ Public Safety - Maryland Police Training

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

HB 794: Public Safety - Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission - Prohibition Against Certain Affiliation or Support by Police Officers: Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Judiciary Committee:

I am writing to respectfully **oppose HB 794**, concerning *Public Safety – Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission – Prohibition Against Certain Affiliation or Support by Police Officers*.

While safeguarding public trust in law enforcement is an important goal, **HB 794** raises significant concerns related to due process, clarity, equal protection, viewpoint neutrality, the scope of restrictions placed on individual officers, and the potential for policies that may unintentionally promote racial tension rather than reduce it.

This legislation will impose broad prohibitions based on perceived affiliations or expressions of support, which could create ambiguity in enforcement and potentially subject officers to disciplinary action without clearly defined standards or sufficient procedural safeguards.

As written, the bill's provisions risk creating standards that could be interpreted or enforced in ways that focus on race-based classifications or assumptions. Policies that single out ideologies or affiliations tied to particular racial dynamics will foster perceptions of unequal treatment among officers, including White officers, and will contribute to division within departments rather than unity and professionalism.

Additionally, the absence of clear, narrowly tailored definitions increases the likelihood of subjective interpretation in disciplinary decisions. This may expose officers to sanctions based on perceived beliefs or associations, rather than demonstrable misconduct, and raises concerns about fairness and consistency in application across Maryland's diverse jurisdictions. Policies affecting employment status and professional certification should be narrowly tailored, consistently applied, and grounded in transparent criteria that respect constitutional protections.

This bill states "...THE COMMISSION SHALL PROHIBIT POLICE OFFICERS FROM: AFFILIATING WITH, SUPPORTING, OR ADVOCATING FOR WHITE SUPREMACIST GROUPS, CAUSES, OR IDEOLOGIES..."

"...“WHITE SUPREMACIST GROUPS, CAUSES, OR IDEOLOGIES” MEANS GROUPS, CAUSES, OR IDEOLOGIES THAT: 1. PROMOTE WHITE SUPREMACY AND THE IDEA THAT WHITE PEOPLE ARE SUPERIOR TO BIPOC; 2. PROMOTE RELIGIOUS AND RACIAL BIGOTRY; 3. SEEK TO EXACERBATE RACIAL AND

ETHNIC TENSIONS BETWEEN BIPOC AND NON-BIPOC; OR 4. ENGAGE IN PATENTLY HATEFUL AND INFLAMMATORY SPEECH, INTIMIDATION, AND VIOLENCE AGAINST BIPOC AS A MEANS OF PROMOTING WHITE SUPREMACY..."

Importantly, the bill lacks a clear definition of "white supremacy".

Efforts to combat bias and discrimination must be undertaken in a manner that reinforces equal treatment under the law for **all** individuals. **This legislation risks being viewed as race-conscious in its scope or enforcement, will undermine morale, erode trust, and inadvertently heighten racial tensions within both law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve.**

Maryland should pursue policies that promote impartial standards, due process protections, and equal accountability—without creating frameworks that could be seen as favoring or disadvantaging individuals based on race or **perceived** identity, support or affiliations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **oppose HB 794**.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,

Trudy Tibbals