

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Dear Members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

I am a resident of Baltimore City and District 41. I am submitting this testimony as a member of Sanctuary Maryland. I am also a clinical psychologist who has provided trainings to law enforcement personnel to improve their ability to safely interact with youth and citizens experiencing mental health issues. I am testifying in **support** of **HB197: Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act**.

HB197 would provide crucial funding to nonviolent alternatives to police in public safety. These could be instrumental in not only improving the safety of our communities through a broader array of public safety interventions, but also improve individuals' access to safe and effective community supports that could otherwise result in needless, harmful, and dangerous interactions with police and the justice system.

As a practitioner who has trained police officers in safe and effective interactions with young people and people experiencing psychiatric illness, I am highly aware of the necessity of nonviolent and non-police based approaches to maintaining public safety. I highly support measures such as HB197 that could further promote Maryland's ability to diversify and enhance our state's ability to provide comprehensive and nonviolent safety measures for our communities.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to **support HB197: Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Katherine Blaha  
Baltimore, MD 21209