

## Written Testimony

My name is Beverly John. I am submitting this testimony in support of reforming the MPIA (HB120/SB 178). It is reported that 90% of complaints against officers made by the public are not sustained. However, as a resident of Prince George's County, I have seen the impact that over-policing and harassment has had on our community over the last 23 years. During street outreach to serve those in need, I hear and see the frustration of our neighbors. I see the hurt and despair of those who just want to enjoy basic rights within their community without harassment. I have been given a first-hand glimpse into the lack of trust the community has for law enforcement across the State. The complaint processes lack transparency and accountability. We see cases where officers have engaged repeatedly in misconduct, even criminal misconduct that was known to the department, but the cases were acquitted. How is the community to place any trust in law enforcement when they are not held accountable? In the State, 80% of exonerees are Black, with officer misconduct as the leading reason for exoneration. We cannot continue to allow officers who bring personal bias and bigotry to the job to prey on our community. We need this legislation

There is national attention on police reform, with a very recent focus on nationalist and terrorist influences within police departments. No one should have to work in such toxicity. Multiple use of force complaints and involvement in cases where lethal force has been used should be red flags to the danger an officer may represent. Hiding these incidents in "personnel" files is an impediment to obtaining justice for families and the community at large. Transparency is the key. We have one more time to pass legislation that will help our community, as well as those officers who must work with other officers who do harm to the community. Help us all by supporting HB120/SB178.

Thank you.