

# Jeffrey A. Harrison

Date: February 2, 2021

Position: **Favorable**

Bill Number: **SB 626 / HB139**

Bill Title: Law Enforcement Officers - Use of Force

Sponsor: Senator Carter

Senate Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Dear Committee Chair Smith, Committee Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Committee Members:

I am a Marylander, and I strongly support SB 626.

Maryland urgently needs a state statute that regulates the use of force. As you know, Maryland does not have statutory limits on use of force, and the Supreme Court cases fail to adequately protect the lives and safety of Maryland residents. We must prohibit officers from using force unless it is **necessary as a last resort**, under the totality of the circumstances, after the officer has exhausted de-escalation and other reasonable alternatives. Failing to change the legal standard will maintain the status quo and let officers remain unaccountable for the harm they cause.

On a daily basis, families in Maryland are traumatized by law-enforcement officers who use physical force instead of the appropriate alternatives. That trauma lasts a lifetime. SB 626 will put a stop to the unnecessary and habitual violence that too many officers react with when interacting with Maryland residents, especially Black and Brown residents.

Now is the time for a statewide use-of-force standard that holds officers accountable when they use unnecessary and unlawful force. SB 626 ensures that officers will do everything they need to do in order to preserve human life.

For those reasons, please support SB 626 and report it as Favorable from the committee.

Thank you.

Jeffrey A. Harrison

(a member of Greenbelt People Power and of Community Justice Coalition)

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