

**Testimony for the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
February 4, 2021**

**SB 626 – Law Enforcement Officers -- Use of Force**

**FAVORABLE**

To Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Committee members,

My name is **Angeli DiGuiseppe** and I live in **District 7**, Maryland. I'm formally submitting my written testimony in support of SB 626 on 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. Instead of merely codifying *Graham* and *Garner* into state law, we must elevate the “objectively reasonable” standard to 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. Although there are other necessary components to a robust use of force statute, failing to change the legal standard will maintain the status quo and let officers remain unaccountable for the harm they cause.

This lack of definition of excessive force and a lack of emphasis on de-escalation in police training and policy has lead to the murder of innocent Maryland Citizens, such as Tyrone West and Freddy Gray. The offices that murdered these people were not fired or convicted of any crime. **IF YOU WANT TO BE REELECTED, NOW IS THE TIME TO PROTECT YOUR CONSTITUENTS.**

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

Attentively,

**Angelia DiGuiseppe**

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