



# Indivisible: Central Maryland

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## **SB0646\_Law Enforcement Officers - Use of Force. Indivisible Central Maryland\_Enagonio Liz\_SUPPORT .**

Indivisible Central Maryland, a grass roots group of citizens from Baltimore City and Baltimore, Anne Arundel, and Prince George's Counties, supports efforts to reform how force is used by police officers against members of the public. While we understand and appreciate that officers are often placed in difficult situations, we have seen way too much violence against unarmed or vulnerable people, especially Black and Brown people, that is not in any way required by the situation.

As Maryland is one of only nine states without a Use of Force law, we feel that the measures taken by this bill are necessary and useful to both the public and the police. The bill specifies that use of force is a last resort, after all other measures, like verbal communications, warnings, physical distance and de-escalation tactics have proven unsuccessful and is only to be used until the person is under the officer's control and does not pose a threat to anyone. It also specifies the definition of use of force and the types of force that are not allowed.

We also support that the bill includes consequences: funding is cut off if law enforcement organizations don't adopt these practices, and officers who violate these practices may be charged with manslaughter or murder, if their actions result in death, or with reckless endangerment if their actions do not.

It is the use of extreme force that has caused the tragedies that we have seen in the news, and many other tragedies that we have not. Adopting these measures would engender more trust between the public and the police, trust that is crucial to maintaining safe communities. For all of these reasons, Indivisible Central Maryland request that the committee vote IN FAVOR of SB0626.

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