



HB1236- Oppose

March 9, 2021

Delegate Luke Clippinger
Chair, Judiciary Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: OPPOSE – HB1236

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Committee Members:

As the State's Attorney for Baltimore City, I strongly oppose House Bill 1236, which would establish a Violent Crimes Special Prosecution Unit within the Attorney General's office for the purpose of only prosecuting cases that originate in Baltimore City. In a city reeling from unprecedented corruption, cyclical poverty, disinvestment, and persistent violence, I share and live through the concerns shared in the General Assembly on improving public safety. Reforming the criminal justice system, strengthening and making our communities more sustainable, increasing economic opportunities and community development, and improving available health resources for communities is the key to reducing violence in our city. This bill is a waste of the limited criminal justice resources available and will not reduce violent crime in Baltimore City, and intends to invest dollars into a program that data and history shows will not address or sustainably reduce violent crime.

HB1236 will create two standards of justice, with two different prosecuting offices directing policy, leading to confusion in our community and in our law enforcement agencies. I was elected as the State's Attorney of Baltimore City, not the Attorney General. My office is charged to safeguard communities in Baltimore City through the effective prosecution of crime, while also striving to pursue justice over convictions. Sometimes justice requires a conviction and lengthy prison sentence, but at other times diverting a defendant out of the criminal justice system to drug rehabilitation, education, or job training. When the evidence exists, justice also requires us to exonerate those that have been falsely accused or wrongfully convicted.

When this issue was litigated as a line item in the Governor's budget for FY21 in the 2020 session, the Attorney General testified that increased prosecution is not the way to solve crime in Baltimore City,¹ and acknowledged that there are multiple factors in play that need to be addressed such as the criminalization of poverty, re-entry, and economic opportunities for all.² The points made by the Attorney General, along with my concerns, make clear that passing this bill is NOT the way to address the rise in violent crime in Maryland. After much debate, deliberation, and consideration in the form of multiple public hearings in 2020, **this line item was removed from the FY21 budget**. This bill seeks to rewrite history and ignore the efforts made last year on this issue. Ultimately this bill is an effort of bad faith.

¹ [House Appropriations Public Safety and Administration Subcommittee, 2/19/2020](#)

² [Senate Budget & Taxation Public Safety, Transportation, and Environment Subcommittee, 2/20/2020](#)

STATE'S ATTORNEY
Marilyn J. Mosby



OFFICE of the STATE'S ATTORNEY for BALTIMORE CITY
120 East Baltimore Street | Baltimore, Maryland 21202

My office has been working with the legislature since the beginning of my administration to work towards improving public safety in Baltimore and across the State, and together we have made great progress. We know what works, and what will not work. I urge you to give an unfavorable report to HB1236.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marilyn Mosby". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly legible.

Marilyn Mosby