

February 9, 2021



THINK JEWISHLY. ACT LOCALLY.

Carol Stern

Chevy Chase, MD 20815

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HBI 39/SB626

Law Enforcement Officers - Use of Force

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Carol Stern, on behalf of Jews United for Justice (JUFJ)

My name is Carol Stern. I live in Chevy Chase, in District 16. I am co-chair of the Justice System Reform & Immigrant Rights Team of Jews United for Justice (JUFJ). JUFJ organizes more than 5,500 Jewish Marylanders and allies in support of local and state campaigns for social, racial, and economic justice. I am providing testimony on behalf of JUFJ in favor of HBI 39/SB626, Law Enforcement Officers - Use of Force.

Jewish tradition teaches us that destroying one life is akin to destroying the entire world. In a world already filled with so much violence, we must move to end police violence and change Maryland laws that prevent us from holding police accountable.

The Maryland Coalition for Justice and Police Accountability (MCJPA), a coalition in which JUFJ participates, has called on the General Assembly to pass five specific and impactful reforms. Limiting the Use of Force by police officers is a key change needed to reform our justice system.

I live in Montgomery County, where we have witnessed many people die at the hands of police in the past few years. Black and brown residents are disproportionately represented. **It is important to remember all of their names. Here are a few: Peter Njang, Emanuel Okutuga, Robert White, Mikyas Tegegne, Duncan Lemp, Finan Berhe, and most recently Kwamena Ocran. They were killed by police in Montgomery County, where I live.** Under the current state of the law, every one of these killings by police officers were (or will be) legally justified. We must hold police accountable, limit the use of lethal force to a “necessary” standard and increase safe and effective ways for police to interact with civilians.

JUFJ respectfully urges a favorable report on HBI 39/SB626.