

**Testimony for the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 9, 2021**

HB 139 – Law Enforcement Officers -- Use of Force

FAVORABLE

To Chairman Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary, and Committee members,

My name is Mitchel Monin and I live in Ellicott City, Maryland. I'm formally submitting my written testimony in support of HB 139 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.

The lack of definition for the term “excessive force” and the lack of de-escalation in police training has led to the murders of innocent Maryland citizens such as Tyrone West and Freddy Gray. The officers that murdered these people were not fired or convicted of any crimes. **IF YOU WANT TO BE RE-ELECTED 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 HB 139.

Attentively,
Mitchel Monin