



HARFORD COUNTY DEPUTY SHERIFF'S UNION

Incorporated 1989

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Maryland House of Delegate Judicial Committee
Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street Annapolis, MD 21401

January 19, 2021

RE: House Bill 139 – Law Enforcement Officers – Use of Force

Dear Delegate Clippinger and Distinguished Members of the Judicial Committee,

On behalf of over 300 members of the Harford County Deputy Sheriff's Union, I respectfully ask that you NOT-SUPPORT House Bill 139.

House Bill 139, or similarly proposed bills, could be the most impactful and a deadly proposition for law enforcement. Every police encounter is determined by circumstances, which requires diverse considerations for de-escalation or escalation of force. Law enforcement officers train continuously to become proficient in these instinctual responses. One of the most ingrained axioms in law enforcement is that action is always faster than reaction. Therefore, seconds matter in these dangerous encounters and if law enforcement is mandated to toggle through an escalation continuum, it will most certainly cost the life of police officers and community members.

The examples of mistakes law enforcement have made in the past, related to use of force, are microscopic compared to the number of actual situations that occur. I would also like to note that mistakes are made in *every* profession and unfortunately also have catastrophic or deadly consequences.

If you mandate these split-second decisions, or limit the resources available, I promise you, it will result in more law enforcement officers or community members being hurt or killed.

Therefore, on behalf of the members of the Harford County Deputy Sheriff's Union, I am requesting the members of the Judicial Committee to vote UN-FAVORABLY in support of House Bill 139.

Sincerely,

Aaron Penman

Aaron Penman, President
Harford County Deputy Sheriff's Union
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