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HB 545 – Public Safety – Persistent Aerial Surveillance
Hearing before the Judiciary Committee, March 1, 2022

Position: SUPPORT

The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a not-for-profit civil rights and anti-poverty legal services organization which seeks to advance social justice, economic and racial equity, and fundamental human rights in Maryland. Our Race Equity Team works to advance racial equity and anti-racism through racial justice advocacy. The **PJC SUPPORTS HB 545** and requests a **FAVORABLE** report.

HB 545 Addresses the Issue of State Agencies' Unrestricted Use of Powerful Technological Tools

As technology advances, unrestricted and unregulated surveillance is a growing problem.¹ HB 545 addresses this problem by ensuring the necessary checks and balances are in place for state agencies to use such invasive means. HB 545 safeguards individuals' right to privacy guaranteed by the Fourth Amendment through requiring a valid warrant and limiting use of concurrent aggregate aerial surveillance, while still permitting state agencies to utilize these technologies when the circumstances are appropriate.²

Oversurveillance Exacerbates Problems Caused by Systemic Racism

History has demonstrated that over-policing, oversurveillance, and a lack of accountability for both disproportionately impact Black and communities of color.³ Without limitation, increased use of powerful and intrusive technologies will compound existing racial inequities.⁴ HB 545 is a critical first step to place a check on invasive surveillance tactics.

For the foregoing reasons, the PJC **SUPPORTS HB 545** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report. Should you have any questions, please call Tyra Robinson at 410-625-9409 ext. 223.

¹ Brennan Center for Justice, *When Police Surveillance Meets the 'Internet of Things'* (Dec. 2020), <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/when-police-surveillance-meets-internet-things>.

² American Bar Association, *A Clear Solution to Police Surveillance Creep: Warrants Needed for Biometric Analysis* (Aug. 2020), https://www.americanbar.org/groups/business_law/publications/blt/2020/08/police-surveillance/.

³ The Century Foundation, *The Disparate Impact of Surveillance* (Dec. 2017), <https://tcf.org/content/report/disparate-impact-surveillance/>.

⁴ Movement for Black Lives, Policy Platform, *End the Surveillance on Black Communities*, <https://m4bl.org/policy-platforms/end-surveillance/> (last visited Feb. 25, 2022).

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