



**HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION**

I, Paula Seabright, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Howard Progressive Project to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

CB83
County Council regarding _____ to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Paula Seabright

Signature: 

Date: 11/14/2021

Organization: Howard Progressive Project

Organization Address: 5305 Village Center Drive #293 Columbia, MD 21044

Number of Members: 9

Name of Chair/President: Kelly Lee

***This form can be submitted electronically via email to
councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 2 hours prior to the start of the
Public Hearing.***

Good evening Chair Walsh and esteemed members of the council. My name is Paula Seabright and I am here tonight representing the Howard Progressive Project to relay our support of Council Bill 83, which would establish a Police Accountability Board in Howard County.

Since George Floyd's death in late May of 2020, 24 states and the District of Columbia have passed legislation to expand oversight of police agencies. We are happy to see that Howard County has an interest in becoming one of over 160 jurisdictions that have enabled a civilian agency or board.

The National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement lists thirteen benefits to civilians, law enforcement officials as well as elected officials that come from having civilian oversight of law enforcement. I will not list them all out, but rather have selected a few.

First and maybe the most obvious, Oversight boards can help hold law enforcement agencies accountable for officer's actions, as well as improve the quality of internal investigations. Second, oversight boards can also be a vehicle for improving community relations by fostering communication between the community and the agencies, and third, oversight boards can assist the community in understanding law enforcement policy and procedures.

The agency states that "All of these potential benefits help to support the goals of community-oriented policing, which seeks to utilize problem solving techniques to work in a cooperative effort with the community to proactively address concerns." We agree.

CB83 calls for five members, with a minimum age of 25. We are hoping that the council will consider amending the minimum age to include a youth member who is between the ages of 16 and 19 and attends a high school in Howard County. We believe it is important to have a youth perspective on boards and commissions and this board should be no different. While many of us have children and believe that we fully understand their concerns and perspective, we are seeing it through our own distorted lens. Only the voice of a youth can relay the actual concerns of the youth in our community.

And as there has been much attention paid to the role of police in schools, we also are hoping the council will consider amending the duties in section J to include a quarterly examination of trends involving SROs and other officers within Howard County Public Schools. We feel it is critical that a regular unbiased review of police interactions occurs, with the goal of protecting our students from overzealous actions of officers, and ensuring that officers are adhering to their sworn duties within the schools and not stepping into roles for which they may not be properly trained.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak, and thank you for considering this important bill. This commitment to accountability and transparency in our law enforcement agencies will make our agencies and their relationships with the residents of Howard County even stronger.

Steven M. Bolen
11101 Resort Rd #237
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Honorable Howard County Council
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

RE: Testimony; CB83-2021 - AN ACT to establish a Police Accountability Board

SUPPORT

Good Evening, Honorable Howard County Council,

My name is Steven Bolen, and I live in Ellicott City, County Council District 5.

I am a member of the Howard County Police Department's Citizens' Advisory Council (CAC), but I present testimony tonight as a private citizen in support of CB83-2021: Legislation Establishing Police Accountability Board for Howard County with consideration of amendments.

The Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 mandates the creation of a County-wide Police Accountability Board that will provide for a process to receive certain complaints alleging police misconduct.

I support the establishment of an Accountability Board, as I'm sure most fair-minded citizens of this County would. In our county, we have long held policies of zero tolerance for police misconduct, and I have seen first-hand, as a member of the CAC, that the Department is committed to transparency and adherence to the highest professional standards.

As per Section 17.207(B), the Board would consist of five voting members appointed by the County Executive and affirmed by the County Council. I urge the County Executive and Council to appoint and affirm individuals that represent our County's diversity not just in terms of race, gender, culture, etc., but also geography.

As a resident of Western Howard County, I would like to ensure equal representation on the Board for the district I live in and for the County in its entirety. I further urge that Board members be selected based on their familiarity with our local law enforcement practices and policies and criminal justice system. But, just as importantly, that they demonstrate fair, reasonable, equitable, unbiased, and impartial decision-making.

I support the Bill, but emphasize to this good Council the need for fair representation when seating the Board in the future.

Respectfully Submitted,
Steven M. Bolen

Sayers, Margery

From: Hiruy Hadgu <hadguhiruy@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 8:30 PM
To: CouncilMail
Cc: Sayers, Margery
Subject: CB83-2021 Police Accountability Board

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Members of the County Council,

I urge the county council to table the legislation as requested by the Police Accountability Task Force (PATF) to ensure adequate community input is received.

The community input will help rectify the many deficiencies described, not least of which is the existence of the appearance of conflict of interest due to the make-up of the Police Accountability Board.

I also urge the county council to allow the PAB to have subpoena power, similar to Article 9, Section 910 of the County Code.

https://library.municode.com/md/howard_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=HOCOCH_ARTIXGEPR_S910SUP
Q

There are several documented issues, including during recent Zoning Board hearings where witnesses were prevented by the Administration from appearing before the Zoning Board.

Accordingly, unequivocal subpoena power would ensure compliance with the Boards request for evidence and witnesses.

Best Regards,

Hiruy.

November 15, 2021

Members of the Council,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify regarding Council Bill 83-2021 which proposes the formation of a Police Accountability Board. Although I am happy to see the County moving forward to put this board in place, I believe that there are many ways in which the proposed legislation must be improved. Hopefully others will point some of those out in their testimonies. I want to focus tonight on the composition of the board, an area in which I believe the County Executive's legislation is greatly flawed. In particular, I am alarmed by the legislation's proposal that the board include members of the Howard County police and sheriff's office, even in a non-voting capacity. The purpose of the board, to my understanding, is to represent the interests of the community in ensuring that the workings of Howard County law enforcement are transparent to the public and that misconduct by law enforcement is dealt with openly, swiftly and in a way that is proportionate to the offense. To maintain its own credibility, it is critical that the board be free of influence from the police and sheriff's office and avoid any possible conflicts of interest. We are all familiar with the analogy of the fox guarding the hen house. Although I do not want to imply any dishonor on the part of Howard County law enforcement, nevertheless, I believe that it is totally inappropriate for the police and sheriff's office to be represented on this watchdog organization. The board must reflect the ethnic, gender, sexual orientation and social-economic diversity of Howard County, and thus should be composed of at least seven members. However, these members should be free of any current association with the Howard County police and sheriff's office. Any need for the Police Accountability Board to receive input from the police or sheriff's office can be satisfied by appointing liaisons from those offices to serve in an advisory capacity as non-board members. I will even go farther and say that the numbers of board members who are ex-members of the Howard County police or sheriff's office should be strictly limited.

This legislation was created without adequate consultation with or input from the residents of Howard County. County residents are depending on you to reject this legislation as written and demand that the independence of this board be clearly established.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this important component of this legislation.

Jacqueline Akinpelu
12048 Open Run Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

November 15, 2021

To: Howard County Council

From: Sue Emerson – Chair, Howard County Police Foundation

Re: Police Accountability Board

On behalf of the Howard County Police Foundation, I would like to express the board's support for the Police Accountability Board and to urge the Council to ensure that individuals with appropriate expertise and unbiased views are appointed.

Established in 1994, the Howard County Police Foundation supports the department by fundraising to support innovative and new programs that are not funded by the county budget. Current programs receiving financial support from the Police Foundation include the Bear Trax youth mentoring program and camp, Collision Avoidance Training for teen drivers, the Community Athletic Program mobile recreation center and National Night Out Against Crime. We are also providing support for health and wellness programs for department personnel that has been mandated by the state legislature, and ongoing community engagement efforts.

We have also provided funding for new equipment such as drones, specialized training, and the purchase of bicycles to allow for additional patrols on pathways and trails. In addition, the Foundation funds scholarships for officers who are pursuing their education and honors outstanding work by police officers and civilian employees at the department's award ceremony each year.

Our support for these programs is done with the full recognition that the police department and the officers who serve are committed to the well being of our community. We are assured by their leadership on a regular basis about ongoing training initiatives that enables officers to respond with appropriate awareness and skill. We strongly support the training and development of a culture that recognizes the balance of law enforcement that keeps our community safe while ensuring that citizens' rights are respected.

The Foundation has been proud to offer its support alongside the department's leadership, and we believe we have been effective partners in recognizing the above principles. Again, while we support citizen oversight, we believe it will be most beneficial if fair and impartial individuals take the time and concern to become familiar with the actual operations with the Howard County Police department and get to know how they have prioritized community engagement and transparent operations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information. My contact information is below; please feel free to contact me at any time for further information.

Sue Emerson
Chair, Howard County Police Foundation
Sue.emerson@comcast.net
410-294-0291



HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, Ted Stewart, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Police Accountability Task Force of Howard County to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding 83-2021 to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Ted Stewart

Signature: Ted Stewart

Date: November 14, 2021

Organization: Police Accountability Task Force of Howard County

Organization Address: 11820 Homewood Rd, Ellicott City, MD

Number of Members: _____

Name of Chair/President: No President / Ted Stewart on behalf of PATF-HC Steering Committee

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