



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

Michael S. Harrison
Police Commissioner

March 1, 2023

Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
Room 400, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

**RE: City Council Bill #22-0256
Public Safety Apprenticeship Program Advisory Commission**

Dear Council President Mosby and Members of the City Council:

The Baltimore Police Department has reviewed Council Bill #22-0256, Public Safety Apprenticeship Advisory Commission, for the purpose of defining certain terms; establishing the Baltimore City Public Safety Apprenticeship Program Advisory Commission; providing for the purpose, composition, and duties of the Commission; and generally relating to the Baltimore City Public Safety Apprenticeship Program Advisory Commission.

Last year the Mayor and City Council enacted bill #21-0094: Public Safety Apprenticeship Program, with the goal of recruiting, mentoring, training, and hiring a new generation of Baltimore city youth and young adults for careers in law enforcement, fire suppression, emergency medical services, and emergency management. The BPD supports this goal and has been working for some time to improve and grow its recruitment efforts.

The BPD recognizes the intent of bill #22-0256 is to provide additional opportunities for interested stakeholders. While we support that overarching goal, there are several key aspects of the bill that are significantly problematic.

1. Allowing the advisory board to “field and review complaints from program participants and provide assistance in resolving the complaints” is an inappropriate role for the Board. Conducting investigations based on complaints would require immense time and energy and also falls under the purview of Human Resources and the Office of Equity and Civil Rights.
2. In addition, BPD has a full time Equity Officer, whose mission is to operationalize and institutionalize the Department’s commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and anti-racism. The Equity Office ensures diversity, equity, and inclusion becomes a part of the agency culture by delivering

training, advising agency leadership, assisting with strategic plans; working closely with the agency's Equal Employment, Opportunity and Diversity Section (E.O.D.S.) and Human Resources offices; reviewing and writing policy, and working closely with community partners.

3. In regards to the proposed makeup of the advisory board, we feel there are several significant logistical issues, including the following:
 - The majority of the proposed voting members are union representatives. This would effectively allow for the public safety unions to have oversight over city agencies. This is an inappropriate labor-management dynamic.
 - Of the voting members, none of the representatives listed represent an agency involved in the apprenticeship program. There are no voting members from the BPD, the Fire Department, Office of Equity and Civil Rights or the Administration.
 - The Board would be better suited by including experts in recruitment, hiring and/or youth engagement. Including leaders in those fields would provide value to the agencies and establish meaningful opportunities for collaboration and growth of the programs.
4. Finally, the responsibilities of the sub-committee are completely unclear and there are no parameters around how often the Board shall convene the group or what they will be asked to do.

We understand and wholeheartedly support the goal of attracting new members from all walks of life, through a variety of carefully designed methods. However, as currently written, City Council Bill #22-0256 does not establish an Advisory Board that will contribute to the overall goal of improving hiring but, rather, creates more problems than it solves. Therefore, the BPD cannot support this bill as written. We would absolutely welcome the opportunity to work with the sponsor to develop legislative language that everyone can be comfortable with and that furthers the overall goal of hiring Baltimore City youth in the apprenticeship program. Moving forward, as a partner in this endeavor, we exercise the same reservation regarding the Advisory Board's duties and expectations, but are willing nonetheless to contribute to discussion and brainstorming sessions.

We look forward to continuing our work with partnering agencies, the bill sponsor, and members of the City Council. Thank you for allowing us to comment on this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,



Erin C. Murphy, Esq.
Director of Government Affairs

cc: Natwana Austin, Executive Secretary of the Baltimore City Council
Nina Themelis, Special Assistant and Legislative Liaison, MOGR
Andrew Smullian, BPD Deputy Chief of Staff
Michelle Wirzberger, Esq., BPD Chief of Staff