



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

Michael S. Harrison
Police Commissioner

November 17, 2021

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

**RE: City Council Resolution #21-0069R
Investigative Hearing – Well-being of the Transgender Community in Baltimore**

Dear Council President Mosby and Members of City Council:

The Baltimore Police Department (BPD) has reviewed Council Resolution 21-0069R which is for the purpose of inviting representatives from the Mayor's Office, the Health Department, the Baltimore Police Department, Baltimore City Public Schools, the Mayor's Office of Homeless Services, the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, the Baltimore City Office of Equity and Civil Rights, the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office, the Baltimore City Department of Social Services, the Maryland Department of Health, Behavioral Health System Baltimore, and other relevant stakeholders to update the Council on services provided to and the general well-being of the transgender community in Baltimore City.

The Baltimore Police Department acknowledges that it has not always had the healthiest relationship with members of the LGBTQ community, especially with members of the Transgender community. But, even as we acknowledge our shortcomings, we are working diligently to identify the areas where we need to strengthen our relationship with the community. The very clear first step in that process is changing the culture within the Department such that every single member, sworn or civilian, acknowledges that not only is discrimination on the basis of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, or Gender Expression illegal and immoral but it also produces untold anxieties, mental anguish, and human suffering for the victims of discrimination themselves, but also among their loved ones.

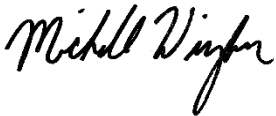
We very much want members of the Transgender community to feel safe and secure reaching out to members of the Department when they have been victims of or witnesses to crimes or at any other time when they are in need. They are entitled to the full enjoyment of all City benefits, including access to its police services. We know there is a tremendous amount of work still to be done, but we believe important progress has been made to change the culture within the Department. Today, we hold our officers accountable for treating everyone with respect and dignity and we have established a formal process for working cooperatively and collaboratively with the LGBTQ community as a whole and the Transgender community specifically.

To that end, at the hearing we plan to discuss the following items:

- ✓ BPD updated policy #720 which can be found at this link:
<https://www.baltimorepolice.org/transparency/bpd-policies/720-interactions-lgbtq-individuals>
- ✓ BPD's LGBTQ Advisory Council
- ✓ BPD's Safe Place Program

Thank you for allowing us to comment on this piece of legislation. We are looking forward to a robust and thoughtful hearing.

Sincerely,



Michelle Wirzberger, Esq.
Director of Government Affairs

cc: Natwana Austin, Executive Secretary of the Baltimore City Council
Natasha Mehu, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
Nina Themalis, Special Assistant and Legislative Liaison, MOGR
Eric Melancon, BPD Chief of Staff
Andrew Smullian, BPD Deputy Chief of Staff