



Testimony  
22-0234: Police Accountability  
Position: **Favorable with Strengthening Amendments**

My name is Ricarra Jones. I am a resident of Baltimore City and I'm the Political Director of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, the nation's largest healthcare workers union. Our union has 5,000 members who work in hospitals and long-term care facilities across Baltimore City, and we are a member of the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs.

Healthcare workers know that police brutality is a public health crisis. This crisis will only continue to get worse if police are never held accountable when they commit acts of misconduct and violence. **We urge a favorable report on Bill 22-0234: Police Accountability**, which will establish Baltimore City's Police Accountability Board (PAB), with **strengthening amendments to ensure the PAB has the powers, independence, and representation it needs to be effective.**

The purpose of creating an independent, civilian-led PAB is to hold police accountable to the communities they are meant to serve. We oppose allowing any PAB seats to go to current or former law enforcement officers, or their family members. To include PAB members that are biased *towards* police is inappropriate and a betrayal of the intent of PABs, which is to allow for *civilian* oversight. We all know that the police will not police themselves, and we can't allow the Blue Wall of Silence to take seats on the PAB as it will damage the PAB's ability to demand real accountability. It is unnecessary for officers and their families to sit on the PAB, because police are represented elsewhere in the investigating and charging process. For these reasons, Calvert, Wicomico, Frederick, Montgomery, and Howard counties have all kept their PAB's 100% civilian-led by barring current and former police officers and their family members from serving on PABs. Baltimore City must do the same.

Furthermore, the PAB members must have the power to elect their own chair. Other jurisdictions in Maryland have adopted this measure as well, because it will create a democratic and transparent PAB that truly represents the voices of overpoliced, underserved communities-- and how those communities want police to be held accountable.

Police accountability and public safety are not mutually exclusive. In fact, police accountability will *increase* public safety by restoring community trust in our institutions that are supposed to uphold justice. Strengthen and vote YES on Bill 22-0234: Police Accountability. Thank you.

In Unity,

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