

House of Delegates Workgroup Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Require all police departments to deploy body-worn cameras by Jan. 1, 2025. Agencies are to submit annual reports to the General Assembly regarding body camera acquisition.

Recommendation 2: Enact a statewide use of force statute that includes the following standards:

- Establish a duty to intervene on the part of law enforcement officers who witness excessive force “beyond what is objectively reasonable”;
- Require each police department in Maryland to have a written policy stating that officers can use “objectively reasonable” force, should the situation warrant it;
- Order every law enforcement agency to have a written policy that states officers should exhaust every avenue to de-escalate conflict before force is employed;
- Require officers to administer medical assistance to people injured as a result of an interaction with the police;
- Require supervising officers to respond to the scene when a law enforcement officer has used physical force which results in the injury or death of a civilian;
- Order that all instances where force is used must be documented;
- Direct each department to have a written policy requiring supervisory review of use of force incidents;
- Charge the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission with creating an early warning system that every department must use to identify officers who exhibit patterns of problematic or forceful behavior;
- Require officers to undergo training that would teach them skills they could use in the field that are less likely to lead to death or serious injury;
- Require officers to sign sanctity of life pledges;
- Order law enforcement officers to sign a document following the completion of their training signifying that they understand and will comply with the use of force statute;
- Specify that officers may only use deadly force in the face of an imminent threat that may lead to the death or serious injury of themselves or a member of the public;
- Require law enforcement to participate in less lethal force training;
- Ban shooting at moving vehicles unless they are being used as a weapon;
- Prohibit the use of chokeholds;
- End the use of no-knock warrants unless the officer has demonstrated that they have attempted to employ less risky methods or that they may be in danger;
- Ban law enforcement agencies from acquiring surplus weaponized or armored vehicles;
- Establish that officers who violate the use of force statute are guilty of a misdemeanor crime punishable by up to 10-years imprisonment;
- Designate the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission as the agency responsible for holding departments accountable when the use of force statute is violated and allow the commission to decertify officers for infringing upon the statute. Decertified officers are to be documented in a decertification database maintained by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission;

- Require that the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission have 10 trained civilian members — four of whom are able to vote — and four members from the General Assembly without the power to vote;
- Withhold Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention funding from agencies that violate the use of force statute;
- Prohibit agencies from hiring officers who were fired or resigned while under investigation for misconduct.

Recommendation 3: Require that police shootings be independently investigated.

Recommendation 4: Prohibit police unions from making collective bargaining agreements about disciplinary actions.

Recommendation 5: Require mental health screenings and assessments prior to hiring any officer and require officers to be reevaluated periodically by a certified mental health professional.

Recommendation 6: Prior marijuana use could no longer be used as a disqualifying factor in the hiring process for prospective officers.

Recommendation 7: Return control of the Baltimore City Police Department to the city.

Recommendation 8: Initiate a study to determine what types of calls for service can be diverted from police to other community resources.

Recommendation 9: Subject officers to periodic physical assessments.

Recommendation 10: Establish a scholarship for college students to take courses geared towards criminal justice. After graduating, scholarship recipients would be required to commit to serving as a law enforcement officer for a specified period of time.

Recommendation 11: Repeal the Law Enforcement Officers’ Bill of Rights.

Recommendation 12: Establish rules of accountability for law enforcement agencies to follow during internal investigations, including:

- Requiring that civilians serve on officer’s trial boards;
- Maintaining a transparent disciplinary process;
- Using a charging committee akin to a grand jury that includes civilians;
- Stripping officers who have been convicted of misdemeanor crimes or who have received probation before judgment of their right to a hearing board;
- Creating an early warning system to identify officers that frequently exhibit problematic behavior;
- Requiring each of Maryland’s 24 jurisdictions to establish a citizen complaint oversight board.