



**Testimony for HB 1029 Lights on for Maryland Program
Environment and Transportation Committee March 7, 2023**

Chairman Barve and Committee, greetings, I am Samuel Jordan, President of the Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition (BTEC). We urge you to report favorably on HB 1029.

HB 1029 was borne in tragedy. “US law enforcement killed at least 1,176 people in 2022, making it the deadliest year on record for police violence since 2013” according to the research group Mapping Police Violence. “Police across the country killed an average of more than three people a day, or nearly 100 people every month last year.”

The racial disparities have also persisted. From 2013 to 2022, Black residents were three times more likely to be killed by US police than white people. Advocates say that many of the routine traffic stops have no relation to public safety but are used to profile certain communities.

HB 1029 creates a chain of local commerce and good will in response to all too many traffic stops particularly of Black people who are subsequently violently assaulted - even killed by police. Murdered for “driving while Black.”

Despite the national increase in killings, there are some signs of progress.

HB 1029 is such a sign of progress. The bill orients trained police to seek non-violent, respectful encounters with drivers whose vehicles are in need of what may be minor repairs.

BTEC applauds the sponsors of HB 1029 and advocates for its passage. The bill proposes alternative responses that are already being piloted showing they are dramatically more effective than police.

My remarks have focused on the harm to be prevented. Because the remedy proposed in HB 1029 is a creative, productive step forward that can hardly be opposed. The funds are available. The connection to local commerce is stipulated and the trust factor is built between communities and the police. The motto “Protect and Serve” becomes a factual description of the encounter instead of a cynical jeer.

Chairman Barve and Committee, BTEC urges a favorable report on HB 1029. Thank you.