



LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

April 9, 2021

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones
Speaker of the House of Delegates
H-101 State House
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Bill Ferguson
President of the Senate
H-107 State House
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Speaker Jones and President Ferguson:

After a thorough review of Senate Bill 600 - *Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 - Surplus Military Equipment and Investigation of Deaths Caused by Police Officers*; and Senate Bill 786 *Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 - Baltimore City - Control of the Police Department of Baltimore City*. I have decided to allow these two bills to pass into law without my signature. As expected, the hard work done over the past year by the House Workgroup to Address Police Reform and Accountability and the Judicial Proceedings Committee yielded several pieces of positive legislation. The two bills mentioned above are meaningful steps forward and offer promise for much needed change. I would like to acknowledge the work of the General Assembly, law enforcement, state's attorneys, and advocates with the goal of promoting conscientious and impactful improvements in police reform and accountability.

Senate Bill 600 - *Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 - Surplus Military Equipment and Investigation of Deaths Caused by Police Officers.*

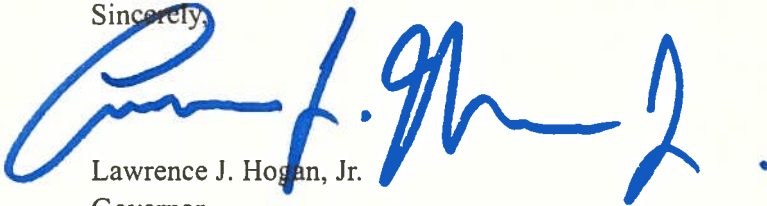
As amended, this bill limits the nature of military surplus equipment available to police agencies to non-weaponized equipment but retains their full ability to access lifesaving equipment excessed from the military at no or low costs. The second objective of this bill is to establish an independent investigation unit within the Attorney General's office to oversee State and local police investigations of police involved shootings. I am concerned that the role of the new agency and the existing investigative units of law enforcement agencies are not clearly defined and could lead to confusion and contention. It is my hope that the AG will work closely with law enforcement to prevent this from happening. It is critical that this unit within the AG's office work with local police and prosecutors to provide a level of public confidence that every investigation of a police involved shooting is conducted in a fully effective and transparent manner.

Senate Bill 786 - Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 - Baltimore City - Control of the Police Department of Baltimore City.

The goal of this legislation is to formalize the autonomous operations of the city police department under the direction and control of Baltimore City. The current reality is that the Mayor and police commissioner already have complete control over all aspects of the department's budget, operations, and training with no input from the state. This legislation will put the Baltimore City Police Department in the same posture as all other Maryland counties with respect to policing and give the Baltimore City government full legal control over the department. It is my sincere hope that passage of this legislation, while largely ceremonial, will empower and motivate the city to take responsibility and accountability for the operation of their police department.

For these reasons, and in accordance with Article II, Section 17 (c) of the Maryland Constitution, I am allowing Senate Bill 600 and Senate Bill 786 to become law without my signature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.", with a large flourish at the end.

Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.
Governor