



To: Dr. Calvin Ball (Howard County Executive), Howard County Council Members (Deb Jung, Opel Jones, Liz Walsh, David Yungmann, Christiana Rigby)

From: PATF-HoCo

CC: Nellie Hutt, Brenda McChriston, Herman Charity, Arnettia Wyre, Ricardo Morales, Paul Rivers, Steve Bolen, Keyonna Kinsler (HoCo Police Accountability Board Liaison), Chief Der, Sheriff Harris, Angela Cabellon, PATF-HoCo Coalition Partners and PATF-HoCo Members

Date: May 29, 2024

Subject: PATF-HoCo's 2023 Police Accountability Board (PAB) Scorecard

Dr. Ball and Howard County Council Members

In the spirit of accountability and transparency, the Police Accountability Task Force of Howard County (PATF-HoCo) believes it is important for our elected officials to receive feedback from community organizations concerning their assessment of the performance of county-appointed Boards who were appointed to serve the community's best interest. In this regard, PATF-HoCo has created its first annual performance scorecard covering the Howard County Police Accountability Board's (PAB) performance in 2023 in meeting its statutory obligations. See attached PATF-HoCo 2023 Annual Performance Scorecard report for the Howard County PAB.

Criteria and metrics used for our evaluation are based on the PAB's performance in meeting its legal obligations under Maryland state legislation and regulations to ensure public accountability and transparency over the powers exercised by LEAs¹ and to work with LEAs and the County Government to improve matters of policing². Our evaluation is based on publicly available information only, including information made available in PAB open meetings and in the PAB's 2023 Annual Report. In our performance scorecard report we have also provided our recommendations for 2024 objectives for the PAB.

Aligned with PATF-HoCo's principles of transparency, and before sending our PAB performance scorecard report to you, in April we provided Ms. Hutt (Chairman of the PAB) and members of the PAB with an advance copy of our performance scorecard report. At that time, we offered them an opportunity to review the document and to provide a response. As of the date of this letter, we have not received a response.

¹ Code of MD Annotated Regulations (COMAR) 12.04.09.03A

² Maryland Public Safety Code Annotated § 3-102



Although our assessment is that the PAB’s performance in 2023 fell significantly below expectations, we are encouraged by initiatives taken by the PAB during their recent May 15, 2024 meeting. Specifically, during that meeting, the **PAB took the following positive steps towards making progress to improve Howard County LEA transparency and accountability:**

- PAB requested racial demographic traffic stop data for 2023. We strongly recommend however, that the request for 2023 racial demographic LEA data be extended beyond just traffic stops. It should include arrests as well. We note that HCPD arrests in 2022 totaled approximately 1,800 of which 58% were of Black persons. This is a racial disparity greater than the already-significant number of HCPD Black person traffic stops (41%).
- PAB voted to follow through on their 2023 Annual Report recommendation to engage a third-party LEA data analysis expert to study the racial disparities in Howard County traffic stops by requesting county and/or LEA funding for this initiative. Again, we encourage the PAB to extend the scope of the third-party study to include not only traffic stops, but also arrests.
- In the face of undisputed significant racial disparities regarding traffic stops in Howard County, several PAB members pressed Howard County LEA to answer the question... **WHY?** Although Howard County LEA offered unsubstantiated speculation, NO evidence-based explanation was provided. We believe the time for speculation has expired and we support the PAB’s quest for timely evidence-based answers to the question... **WHY?** Our quest for “evidence-based” answers reinforces the need for engaging a third-party LEA data expert to assess the root causes of the racial disparities and to provide a comprehensive mitigation plan.

We hope this information is helpful and we look forward to collaborating with you to make progress towards improving LEA transparency and accountability in Howard County. Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or if we can provide assistance.

Best regards, Ted Stewart
On behalf of PATF-HoCo