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Attorney General Brown Testifies on Civil Rights Enforcement and Other Key Legislative Priorities

Priority Bills Would Protect Civil Rights, Promote Equity, Increase Police Accountability and Transparency, and Enhance Public Safety

BALTIMORE, MD (March 1, 2023) – Maryland Attorney General Anthony G. Brown today will testify in support of proposed legislation that reflects his top priorities as Maryland’s new Attorney General—fighting discrimination and inequities, protecting Marylanders against civil rights violations, pursuing remedies for unlawful police practices, and enhancing public safety.

“We want every Marylander to have an equal shot at all the rights and privileges of living in this great State, free from discrimination or bias,” said Attorney General Brown. “Every Marylander should also feel protected by the law enforcement agencies we entrust to keep us safe. We are asking for authority to do our part to help build a safer and more equitable Maryland.”

The Attorney General is seeking authority to enforce civil rights violations throughout Maryland. Proposed [legislation](#) currently before the Maryland General Assembly would allow the Attorney General to investigate conduct that violates any federal or State civil rights laws, along with subpoena authority to obtain information during investigations into the alleged misconduct. The legislation would also allow the Attorney General to seek injunctive relief to prohibit further violations and to obtain civil penalties.

The Attorney General’s second priority [bill](#) would afford the Office authority to investigate and initiate non-criminal actions to remedy unlawful patterns or practices by officials in law enforcement, corrections, and detention. Numerous other states have passed similar legislation aimed at combatting systemic police misconduct, including California, Colorado, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nevada, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Washington.

To align Maryland with best practices in police accountability, Attorney General Brown has also supported [legislators’ efforts](#) to extend prosecutorial authority to his office’s Independent Investigations Division. This unit was created by the General Assembly two years ago as part of its police reform initiative to investigate police-involved fatalities. The bill would enhance public confidence that prosecution decisions are made in an impartial manner, by people who do not work together or rely on each other professionally or personally.

The Attorney General's office has also requested, through the Governor's budget, additional resources and personnel to expand the Organized Crime Unit to enhance public safety, fight human and drug trafficking, and combat other violent crime throughout the State.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2023/030123.pdf>