

## HB 1507: Independent Prosecutions of Criminal Conduct Arising from Police Use of Force

WDA and WACDL strongly support the creation of an independent prosecution unit in the Attorney General's Office to investigate and prosecute crimes involving use of deadly force by police officers. We have significant concerns with the bill as currently written as it does not require independent investigations and prosecutions, but rather relies upon the discretion of local prosecutors to determine if a conflict of interest exists. Community trust in the investigation and prosecution of police use of force incidents requires that such activities be completely independent and that families and the law enforcement officers under investigation not be subject to multiple and potentially conflicting investigations.

- **A truly independent investigation and prosecution of police misconduct cannot be conducted by local prosecutors.** There is an inherent conflict of interest in having the same office that relies upon law enforcement agencies to investigate crimes in its jurisdiction and with which they have a close working relationship to also provide an objective analysis in use of force incidents.
- **It is critical that these activities be conducted by a separate office in the Attorney General's Office.** Requesting an investigation by another county agency does not address the underlying distrust that officers and prosecutors will have implicit or explicit biases in favor of the law enforcement officers' accounting of incidents. Only a completely separate entity would be insulated from such pressures and could ensure an enhanced level of trust in the process.
- **It is critical that the protections in place do not needlessly re-traumatize the individuals involved in the investigations, especially family members.** Creating a simple, direct process that assures from the outset an objective, independent investigation will do much to help establish community trust in the process.

***For more information, contact:***

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