The objective of our proposed local police reform agenda is to provide community residents the opportunity to serve on police trial boards that determine discipline for police officers who are accused of misconduct. This particular reform is extremely important because it gives people in communities the authentic power to be a part of the discipline process for police officers that are supposed to serve them.

Statewide effort to amend the Law Enforcement Officer Bill of Rights (LEOBR) in the 2016 Legislative Session:

- The trial board is also known as the administrative hearing board, which is essentially an appeals board. Officers may appeal the administrative decision to a third-party board which then decides if the discipline issued by the Police Commissioner is justified or not.

- This explains why traditionally the issue of police trial boards has been framed as a “management versus labor” issue (the “boss” or chief punishes the “worker” or police officer).

- Prior to April 2016, Maryland’s Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights specified that only other cops could be on the trial board. Last year, this state law was amended to allow for non-police officers to also serve on the trial board.

- The amended legislation now allows local jurisdictions (i.e. Baltimore City) to pass local legislation that enables a non-police officer to serve on the trial board.

What the proposed bill should do:

- We should pass City Council legislation that requires that civilians serve on trial boards for incidents that involve accusations of police misconduct involving civilians.

- Legislation should also set up a subcommittee of the Baltimore City Council, under the public safety committee, that would: vet applicants, facilitate open hearings, and offer a list of civilians the police commissioner could then choose from for trial board appointments that address matters involving civilians.