

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORT
2025 Legislative Session

Reference No.: CB-061-2025
Draft No.: 2
Committee: Health, Human Services, and Public Safety
Date: October 16, 2025
Action: FAV(A)

REPORT:

Committee Vote: Favorable 5-0 (In favor Council Members Blegay, Fisher, Olson, Oriadha, and Watson)

The Health, Human Services, and Public Safety Committee met on October 16, 2025, to consider CB-061-2025.

Staff provided an overview of CB-061-2025, also known as Zoey's Law, which focuses on how police officers in Prince George's County conduct vehicle pursuits. The bill makes clear that pursuits should only happen under specific circumstances and encourages officers to avoid chasing suspects, as it is safer to wait.

To ensure accountability, the legislation requires every vehicle pursuit to go through an administrative review process and directs the Police Department to compile annual reports on pursuit activity. The overall goal is to improve public safety, reduce unnecessary risks during chases, and increase transparency and oversight in how pursuits are handled.

Mr. David Williams, Legislative Budget & Policy Analyst, explained that the fiscal impact statement was based on an earlier version of the bill, but no significant financial effects are expected under the revised draft.

Eric Irving, Legislative Attorney, summarized the key amendments in Draft 2. He noted that the new draft removes sections that previously altered internal police pursuit policies, focusing instead on reporting requirements and coordination between jurisdictions. The updated version also requires that all local police departments in the county meet at least the same pursuit standards as the Prince George's County Police Department.

To support this, the bill directs the County Executive to update mutual aid agreements with municipalities so that each reflects these minimum pursuit standards within six months of the bill's effective date.

Council Vice Chair Oriadha, the bill sponsor, explained that Zoey's Law was inspired by the tragic death of three-year-old Zoey and two other residents who died in similar crashes within a month. The goal of the bill is to help prevent future tragedies by improving pursuit standards.

After discussions with the Police Chief, Police Union, and County Administration, Draft 2 was introduced as a compromise, aligning with existing county police policies while ensuring local departments meet at least the same pursuit standards.

Council Vice Chair Oriadha added that a related state bill seeks to make deaths caused during police pursuits a felony, not a misdemeanor, and expressed hope that both efforts will strengthen safety and accountability.

Sonia Owens, Council Liaison, Office of the County Executive, presented proposed amendments. She recommended adding "or other law enforcement agency" after the word "corporation" on page 3, line 24, and inserting "minimum" before "standards" on line 25.

She also suggested, pending legal review, that the legislation apply prospectively rather than retroactively.

Ms. Owens stated that the County Executive's Office supports the bill with these amendments.

Dinora Hernandez, Associate County Attorney, Office of Law, explained that the legislation is presumed to apply prospectively unless otherwise stated, confirming that no additional language was needed.

Mr. Joseph Ruddy, Deputy County Attorney, added that the Police Chief and Assistant Police Chief were unable to attend the meeting due to attending a funeral service within the department, but asked that their support for the legislation be noted.

Council Vice Chair Oriadha made a motion to move Draft 2 favorably with the Administration's two additional amendments. The motion was seconded by Council Member Watson.

The Health, Human Services, and Public Safety Committee voted 5-0 in favor of CB-061-2025 Draft 2 as amended.