

SENATE BILL 644

P5

11r2293
CF 11r1478

By: **Senators Ferguson and Madaleno**

Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2011

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Joint Committee on Transparency and Open Government Act**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Joint Committee on Transparency and Open
4 Government; specifying the membership, chairs, and staff of the Committee;
5 requiring the Committee to hold meetings under certain circumstances;
6 authorizing the Committee to hold certain hearings and to consider certain
7 votes and resolutions; specifying the purposes of the Committee; requiring the
8 Committee to make certain recommendations, review certain laws, programs,
9 services, and policies, consult with certain State entities, and perform certain
10 other duties; requiring the Committee to submit a certain report to the General
11 Assembly on or before a certain date each year; and generally relating to the
12 Joint Committee on Transparency and Open Government.

13 BY adding to

14 Article – State Government

15 Section 2–10A–14

16 Annotated Code of Maryland

17 (2009 Replacement Volume and 2010 Supplement)

18 Preamble

19 WHEREAS, An open and transparent government is vital to encourage citizen
20 participation and input; and

21 WHEREAS, The presiding officers of the Senate of Maryland and the House of
22 Delegates implemented changes to the General Assembly Web site to increase
23 constituent access to government resources and actions by disclosing committee votes,
24 granting free access to all areas to the General Assembly Web site, and posting video
25 and audio streaming of committee hearings online; and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 WHEREAS, It is in Maryland's best interest to continue to build on and improve
2 citizen engagement in all aspects of our government; and

3 WHEREAS, Maryland's overall rankings on government transparency by
4 prominent national organizations continues to lag behind other states; and

5 WHEREAS, Advocates have expressed a desire and need for a body that can
6 accept and consider ideas related to transparency and open government year-round;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, Other states have created special committees and work groups to
9 develop transparency policies and use technology to improve transparency and have
10 reported increases in both citizen engagement and budget savings as a result of those
11 efforts; and

12 WHEREAS, Transparency Web sites developed in other states have been
13 proven to save states millions of dollars through more efficient government operations,
14 fewer manual information requests, more competitive contracting bids, and the
15 prevention of waste and abuse of public funds due to enhanced public scrutiny; and

16 WHEREAS, Maryland needs a central legislative body that can consider various
17 policies and proposals regarding government transparency; and

18 WHEREAS, A joint committee on transparency and open government can
19 develop policies and advise the General Assembly on implementing those policies and
20 improving transparency while working with existing entities, programs, and
21 resources; now, therefore,

22 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
23 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

24 **Article – State Government**

25 **2-10A-14.**

26 **(A) THERE IS A JOINT COMMITTEE ON TRANSPARENCY AND OPEN**
27 **GOVERNMENT.**

28 **(B) (1) THE COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF 12 MEMBERS.**

29 **(2) OF THE 12 MEMBERS:**

30 **(I) 6 SHALL BE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE OF MARYLAND,**
31 **APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE; AND**

1 **(II) 6 SHALL BE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES,**
2 **APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE.**

3 **(C) FROM AMONG THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE, THE**
4 **PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE SHALL APPOINT A SENATOR TO SERVE AS THE**
5 **SENATE CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE, AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE SHALL**
6 **APPOINT A DELEGATE TO SERVE AS THE HOUSE CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE.**

7 **(D) THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES SHALL PROVIDE**
8 **STAFF ASSISTANCE TO THE COMMITTEE.**

9 **(E) THE PURPOSES OF THE COMMITTEE ARE TO:**

10 **(1) PROVIDE CONTINUING LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT REGARDING**
11 **TRANSPARENCY AND OPEN GOVERNMENT; AND**

12 **(2) MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING INITIATIVES THAT**
13 **WILL INCREASE CITIZEN ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT RESOURCES, PUBLICATIONS,**
14 **AND ACTIONS.**

15 **(F) THE COMMITTEE SHALL HOLD:**

16 **(1) AN ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING PROMPTLY AFTER THE**
17 **APPOINTMENT OF ITS MEMBERS; AND**

18 **(2) ANY OTHER MEETINGS THAT THE COMMITTEE CONSIDERS**
19 **NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT ITS DUTIES EFFICIENTLY.**

20 **(G) THE COMMITTEE MAY:**

21 **(1) HOLD A HEARING ON ANY MATTER RELATING TO THE**
22 **FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE; AND**

23 **(2) CONSIDER A VOTE ON A BILL OR RESOLUTION REFERRED TO**
24 **IT BY THE PRESIDENT OR THE SPEAKER.**

25 **(H) THE COMMITTEE SHALL:**

26 **(1) IDENTIFY AREAS IN WHICH THE STATE CAN IMPROVE ITS**
27 **TECHNOLOGY AND WEB SITES TO INCREASE TRANSPARENCY AND CITIZEN**
28 **ENGAGEMENT;**

29 **(2) MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING STATE**
30 **TRANSPARENCY GOALS AND POLICIES;**

1 **(3) CONSULT WITH STATE ENTITIES THAT FOSTER**
2 **TRANSPARENCY, INCLUDING THE GOVERNOR'S STATESTAT OFFICE:**

3 **(I) WHEN DEVELOPING STATE TRANSPARENCY GOALS AND**
4 **POLICIES; AND**

5 **(II) TO IDENTIFY METHODS OF COORDINATING**
6 **TRANSPARENCY POLICIES ACROSS STATE GOVERNMENT;**

7 **(4) REVIEW STATE LAWS, PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND POLICIES**
8 **AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ALIGN THEM WITH STATE TRANSPARENCY**
9 **POLICIES AND GOALS;**

10 **(5) DETERMINE WHETHER THERE ARE INTERDEPARTMENTAL**
11 **GAPS, INCONSISTENCIES, AND INEFFICIENCIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OR**
12 **ATTAINMENT OF STATE TRANSPARENCY POLICIES AND GOALS;**

13 **(6) IDENTIFY LAWS, PROGRAMS, SERVICES, OR BUDGETARY**
14 **PRIORITIES THAT NEED TO BE ADOPTED TO ENSURE AND PROMOTE**
15 **TRANSPARENCY AND OPEN GOVERNMENT IN THE STATE;**

16 **(7) SURVEY TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVES IN OTHER STATES THAT**
17 **HAVE PROVEN EFFECTIVE AT SAVING PUBLIC FUNDS AND RESOURCES AND**
18 **ASSESS WHETHER THOSE POLICIES SHOULD BE MODIFIED AND ADOPTED FOR**
19 **USE BY THE STATE;**

20 **(8) SERVE AS AN INFORMATIONAL RESOURCE AND LIAISON FOR**
21 **ADVOCATES AND CITIZENS WITH IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR TOOLS AND**
22 **PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF INITIATIVES THAT WILL INCREASE**
23 **TRANSPARENCY;**

24 **(9) REVIEW AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING ACTIONS**
25 **SUGGESTED BY ADVOCATES AND CITIZENS TO INCREASE CITIZEN ACCESS TO**
26 **GOVERNMENT RESOURCES, PUBLICATIONS, AND ACTIONS;**

27 **(10) RECOMMEND METHODS OF INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS**
28 **OF GOVERNMENT RESOURCES, PUBLICATIONS, AND WEB SITES; AND**

29 **(11) PERFORM ANY OTHER ACTIVITY THAT IS REQUIRED TO**
30 **FULFILL THE PURPOSES OF THE COMMITTEE.**

1 **(I) (1) SUBJECT TO § 2-1246 OF THIS TITLE, THE COMMITTEE SHALL**
2 **SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1**
3 **EACH YEAR.**

4 **(2) THE REPORT SHALL INCLUDE:**

5 **(I) A DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE; AND**

6 **(II) ANY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE.**

7 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
8 October 1, 2011.