

MARY L. WASHINGTON, PH.D
Legislative District 43
Baltimore City

Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair
Joint Committee on Ending
Homelessness

Chair
Joint Committee on Children,
Youth, and Families



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 102
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3145 · 301-858-3145
800-492-7122 Ext. 3145
Mary.Washington@senate.state.md.us

SUPPORT - SB 974/HB 1055

**PUBLIC ETHICS – LOBBYISTS – GIFT EXCEPTION AND REGULATED ACTIVITIES
EXEMPTION**

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and fellow committee members,

The goal of SB 974, as amended, is to subject an official's or employee's acceptance of gifts from a State governmental entity that employs a regulated contract lobbyist to the same restrictions as gifts accepted from other regulated lobbyists.

Current public ethics laws allow governmental entities to be exempt from the same restrictions and regulations as other entities that hire regulated lobbyists. As the State Ethics Commission states in their written testimony, SB 974 "would deny a claim that has been made on rare occasions by State governmental units employing a lobbyist that they can "have it both ways". That is, they contend they can engage the services of a regulated lobbyist to advocate on their behalf but can avoid the gift restrictions that apply to lobbying entities if they decide to provide gifts by simply excluding their lobbyist from the gift giving process."

By removing state governmental entities that employ a regulated contract lobbyist from this exemption, we can increase transparency and ensure that our public ethics laws are being applied as they should be.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge a favorable report on this bill.

In Partnership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mary L. Washington".

Mary L. Washington, PhD