



The Senate of Maryland
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTLEMAN

SB 963 – MARYLAND OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR HEALTH

This is a bill about transparency and good government. It's about following best practices in ensuring that public funds are used for the purposes they are intended and are spent wisely, effectively, efficiently – and legally.

Creating an independent Office of the Inspector General for Health, jointly appointed by the Governor, Attorney General, and State Treasurer, subject to the advice and consent of the Senate, is consistent with the approach we are taking with regard to Education, creating an Office of Inspector General for Education, appointed only a few weeks ago.

Our spending on health is nearly one-third of our entire budget. Literally billions of dollars are expended involving countless payments to hospitals, vendors, contractors, individuals, etc. And, while we have a regular system, through the Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee, to shine a light on the workings of the Department, they do not have the resources to be able to focus on the day-to-day workings of such a large entity. There is an Office of Inspector General internal to the Health Department but we believe this office and its responsibilities need to be elevated and have responsibility to report to the legislature as well as the Executive branch.

The fiscal note is going to be addressed by some amendments and our intention is to repurpose some of the IG's resources to make the new office revenue neutral.

Transparency and accountability have been two of the watchwords of the 2020 General Assembly and we believe this bill is consistent with this important message. Respectfully, I ask for your support of SB 963.