



**Maryland | Delaware | DC Press Association**

P.O. Box 26214 | Baltimore, MD 21210

443-768-3281 | [rsnyder@mddcpres.com](mailto:rsnyder@mddcpres.com)

[www.mddcpres.com](http://www.mddcpres.com)

**To:** Health & Government Operations Committee  
**From:** Rebecca Snyder, Executive Director, MDDC Press Association  
**Date:** February 11, 2020  
**Re:** **HB 42 – Support**

The Maryland-Delaware-District of Columbia Press Association represents a diverse membership of media organizations, from large metro dailies such as the Washington Post and the Baltimore Sun, to publications such as The Daily Record and online only outlets such as Maryland Matters and Baltimore Brew.

The Press Association supports HB 42, which would reduce the response time for custodians to fulfill a public records request from 30 days to 7 days and reduce the time to request an extension of the fulfillment period from 10 days to 5 days.

Although there are instances where voluminous requests cannot be filled in a seven-day window, the law has a process where custodians communicate with requestors and are able to request extensions. Many times, our members do not hear anything from custodians until the end of the response period and sometimes records requests are simply ignored. From our perspective, custodian adherence to the response deadline is uneven and without a mechanism for enforcement, deadlines lose their potency.

Currently, Maryland has the longest response time in the nation at 30 days (Vermont has the shortest, with 2 days). The next longest response times are Iowa at 20 days, and Delaware at 15 days. Nearly 25% of states having a response time of 3-5 days. Nearly a third of states require a “prompt” response or have no time limit. We acknowledge that it will take a concerted effort by custodians to shift the response time and may involve instituting stronger records management procedures. However, every other state has been able to manage a significantly shorter time frame and we believe Maryland custodians are capable of this as well.

The Press Association encourages a favorable report on HB 42.

**FACTS**

MDDC PRESS  
ASSOCIATION

**MATTER**

**We believe a strong news media is  
central to a strong and open society.**

Read local news from around the region at [www.mddcnews.com](http://www.mddcnews.com)

