

Bill Number: HB76
Scott D. Shellenberger, State's Attorney for Baltimore County
Support

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF SCOTT D. SHELLENBERGER,
STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY,
IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 76
RESITRICTIONS ON RELEASE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

I write in support of House Bill 76 restrictions on release of personal information of victims and witnesses as a common sense protection that should have been enacted years ago.

Currently under Maryland Rule 4-263(d)(3) discovery in Circuit Court, the State may shield the address and telephone number of victim and witnesses, but only in **felony** cases. This same method applies to felonies under Maryland Criminal Procedure 11-205.

Under Maryland Rule 4-262, discovery in District Court, the same shielding option is not present. This means every year in tens of thousands of misdemeanor cases, the name, address and telephone number of the victims and witnesses of crime must be disclosed to the criminal defendant.

In this day and age of increased witness intimidation, the inability to shield such information makes no sense. Very often the animosity in District Court misdemeanor cases run just as high as in felony cases. The need to protect victim and witness personal information is no less important in misdemeanor cases as felony cases.

I urge a favorable report for House Bill 76.