



**Testimony for the House Health and Government Operations
Committee
February 11, 2021**

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**HB 228 – University of Maryland Medical System –
Applicability of the Public Information Act and Open Meetings
Act**

FAVORABLE

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The ACLU of Maryland supports HB 228, which would apply the Public Information Act and Open Meetings Act to the University of Maryland Medical System Corporation.

The ACLU of Maryland believes strongly in open and transparent government, because a true democracy demands it. The PIA is a necessary tool for Marylanders to provide checks and balances on government agencies and public officials. Filing PIA requests and obtaining information is a meaningful step toward keeping systems of governance accountable.

Additionally, under Maryland's Open Meetings Act:

- a) It is essential to the maintenance of a democratic society that, except in special and appropriate circumstances:
 1. public business be performed in an open and public manner; and
 2. citizens be allowed to observe:
 - i. the performance of public officials; and
 - ii. the deliberations and decisions that the making of public policy involves.¹

Transparency is a valuable tool for ensuring civic participation and government accountability. The public has great interest in the business conducted by the University of Maryland Medical System, and the right to stay apprised of on-going policy discussions and the decision-making process.

HB 228 is another important step toward ensuring that public bodies are accessible and to their communities, and increasing trust in fair governance.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge a favorable review on HB 228.

¹ Md. Code Ann., State Gov't § 10-501 (West).



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