



**State's Attorney for Garrett County**

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Lisa Thayer Welch  
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February 10, 2021

Maryland General Assembly  
Attn: House Judicial Committee  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Opposition to H.B. 502

Dear Committee Members:

This letter is to submit my opposition to H.B. 502, Collection and Publication of Prosecutorial Information. The requirements of this bill would have a devastating impact on the budget of my office and Garrett County. Further, most of the information sought is available through existing sources.

The total budget for my office for FY2021 is \$715,766 (salaries, benefits & operating). To implement the mandates of this bill, I would have to hire at least three additional employees and purchase various software packages that would increase this budget by \$250-\$275,000, approximately 38%. This comes at a time when the County is still dealing with the effects of the COVID crisis and the expected expenses with implementation of the Blueprint for Education (Kirwan Bill/HB1300) and the expected expenses to handle the body worn camera evidence.

Much of the data being requested is available from other sources, including Maryland Judiciary Case Search and MDEC for all cases and the Maryland Sentencing Guidelines for felony cases. Even with data specialists working the cases, it would still require the attorney assigned to the case to assure all of the 60+ (counting sub-categories) data pieces was collected, as much would have to come from that attorney. I would prefer prosecutors spend time talking to victims and witnesses, reviewing evidence and preparing cases for the best outcomes instead of worrying about documenting if they made a bail recommendation or every term of every plea offer made during a busy session of District Court.

There can be no justification for passing this bill with its duplicitous data collection and exorbitant costs. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa Thayer Welch".

Lisa Thayer Welch