



## **Testimony to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**SB747 - Public Information Act - Personnel Records - Police Officers**

**Position- Oppose**

**By: Nancy Soreng**

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The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. The League advocates against systemic racism in the justice system and, at a minimum, for preventing excessive force and brutality by law enforcement. The League supports a criminal justice system that is just, effective, equitable, transparent, and that fosters public trust at all stages.

The League supported the passage of Anton's Law, which amended the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) to enable public disclosure of records of police misconduct investigations. Named for 19-year-old Anton Black who was killed by police in Greensboro, Maryland. Anton's Law allows communities to know whether their police departments are appropriately handling complaints of police abuse and punishing misconduct.

Senate Bill 747 would deny the release of records related to administrative or criminal investigation of misconduct by a police officer, including internal affairs investigatory records. This bill would roll back the transparency and accountability in investigation of police misconduct created by Anton's Law, which is an essential part of the Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021.

Without access to these vital records, the public is unable to know if an investigation of misconduct was thorough. For example, what evidence was examined, who was interviewed, was body camera footage reviewed? Secrecy about investigations undermines the trust that police are held accountable for their actions. Anton's Law is a crucial part of addressing the crisis of police misconduct in Maryland.

The League of Women Voters, Maryland, representing 1500+ concerned citizens throughout Maryland, strongly urges an unfavorable report.