

Carol Stern
4550 North Park Avenue, Apt T106
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

TESTIMONY ON SB 747 - POSITION: OPPOSED
Public Information Act - Personnel Records - Police Officers

TO: Chair Smith & Co-Chair Waldststeicher & Members of the Committee

FROM: Carol Stern

My name is Carol Stern, and I am testifying against SB797, as a resident of Montgomery County's District 16 and a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda.

The Jewish text that shapes my religious and moral conviction that Anton's Law is a very important piece of criminal justice reform for Maryland is the directive issued in Deuteronomy 16:20, "**Tzedek, tzedek tirdof - Justice, justice shall you pursue.**" The Jewish sages explain that the word tzedek is repeated not only for emphasis but to teach us that in our pursuit of justice, our means must be as just as our ends. When we are working to reform our criminal justice system, we must demand that it operates in accordance with these deeply held Jewish beliefs.

As a resident of Montgomery County, I know of two important examples where Anton's Law was used to obtain records of police officers involved in serious complaints. 1) **The investigative file of the two officers, who verbally and emotionally abused and mistreated a 5-year old child and his mother at an elementary school in Silver Spring were obtained using Anton's Law.** This outrageous case that drew international attention did not involve a single charge of racial bias or excessive force, but It was essential for our community to know exactly what punishment was meted out in response to the officers' harmful actions.

2) By obtaining the records related to the officers who killed a young Black man in Gaithersburg, the **community learned that these officers had previously engaged in verbally abusive conduct towards a car full of young Black men during an unlawfully prolonged traffic stop.**

All of the information obtained using Anton's Law, has been used by advocates in Montgomery County to educate and advocate for important police reforms with lawmakers and community leaders.

I am opposed to SB 747 because it seeks to gut some of the most important parts of Anton's Law that we worked so hard to pass during many sessions in Annapolis. By limiting the community's ability to have the information it needs to advocate for its most vulnerable members, it will be impossible to rectify police misconduct and systemic problems with policing.

I urge you to issue an unfavorable report on SB747.