



**Testimony for the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
March 3, 2023**

SB 747 Public Information Act - Personnel Records - Police Officers

UNFAVORABLE

The Baltimore County Coalition for Police Accountability strongly opposes SB 747, which would deny the release of records related to administrative or criminal investigation of misconduct by a police officer, including internal affairs investigatory records.

For years, when a citizen in our state would file a complaint of police misconduct, they were unable to access the adjudication process in relation to their complaint. The only information they could obtain was the disciplinary outcome; one was unable to assess whether the department conducted a thorough or lackluster investigation of their complaint. This was due to the complaint file being considered a “personnel record” under Maryland’s Public Information Act, and personnel records may never be disclosed.

This changed when Anton’s Law passed in 2021, amending the Maryland’s Public Information Act. Anton’s Law provides transparency to communities seeking answers that was missing for decades. It allows communities to know whether their police departments are properly investigating their complaints of police misconduct and abuse. We know that police transparency is necessary for community trust.

Our Coalition members, alongside more than 90 partners from across the state, supported Anton’s law for these very reasons. In Baltimore County, only 11% of civilian complaints against Baltimore County police officers were sustained; only 4% of civilian complaints of excessive force were upheld [\[Source\]](#). This is highly concerning.

In light of these concerns, SB 747 is a massive step in the wrong direction. Police transparency is necessary for community trust. We cannot go back to secrecy. We must uphold Anton’s Law.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge an unfavorable report on SB 747.