



Maryland | Delaware | DC Press Association

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To: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Rebecca Snyder, Executive Director, MDDC Press Association

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Re: SB747 - OPPOSE

The Maryland-Delaware-District of Columbia Press Association represents a diverse membership of newspaper publications, from large metro dailies such as the Washington Post and the Baltimore Sun, to hometown newspapers such as the Star Democrat and Maryland Independent, to publications such as The Daily Record, Baltimore Jewish Times, and online-only publications such as Bethesda Beat, MarylandReporter.com and Baltimore Brew.

The Press Association urges the Committee to reject SB 747. This bill would create very narrow and specific categories of personnel exemptions for police misconduct. Under this legislation, only allegations of excessive use of force or racial bias would be open to the Public Information Act. As it stands now, personnel records are classified as investigatory records, which are subject to protections to protect privacy, ongoing investigations, and other legitimate interests. The current law is still being implemented, imperfectly, with police departments slowly coming into compliance. Is not the time to undo transparency in policing.

This issue is important to our members because increasingly, in our member reporters' experience, records are being classified as personnel records, making it more and more difficult to gather news and information important to the public. Investigations into police misconduct shed light on the practices of public employees and can establish patterns of behavior that would be lost with such narrow exemptions.

We urge an unfavorable report.



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