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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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HB1093 - Anne Arundel County - Human Relations Commission - Subpoena Enforcement

Good afternoon Chairman, Vice Chair, and members of the Judiciary Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present House Bill 1093.

This bill is the result of discussions with Anne Arundel County regarding its authority to investigate claims of discrimination. Currently, the County Human Relations Commission (HRC) which was created by Charter amendment conducts investigations of discrimination complaints in housing. The County is seeking to expand that role to additional areas beyond housing; however, before they do so, the HRC requires proper authority to conduct investigations effectively. Under current law, the County HRC does not have clear authority to enforce investigatory subpoenas, hindering its ability to complete investigations into claims of discrimination. HB1093 offers a path for the County to fairly and efficiently investigate discrimination complaints.

HB1093 will codify the authority of Anne Arundel County's HRC to seek enforcement of a subpoena through an application to the Circuit Court. This authority aligns with subpoena authority currently afforded to the Maryland Commission for Civil Rights, and will ensure that the County HRC has similar ability to investigate and address cases of discrimination as the County works to enhance its civil rights protections. Granting the County HRC this authority will enable it to more quickly and effectively fulfill its purpose to "promote and enhance the ability of all Anne Arundel County residents to pursue their lives free of discrimination."¹

Codifying this authority is an important step in enforcing anti-discrimination laws in Anne Arundel County. I respectfully request a favorable report on HB1093.

¹ <https://www.aacounty.org/human-relations-commission>