



SB 554 / HB 806: frivolous, vexatious, *ABUSIVE*, or in bad faith

House Health and Government Operations Committee

Good afternoon Committee Members. My name is Laura Anderson Wright, I am a 30 year employee of the University of Maryland, College Park where I wear two hats: I serve as Sr. Associate General Counsel & the Public Records Officer. I am here today speaking on behalf of the University of Maryland, College Park, the flagship member of the University System of Maryland.

A little about me: Raised & Volunteer: 14; Lived in 18, 21, 17 and now 16; Work in 21 for all of my 30 years. Thus, I am deeply invested in our State, its ideals and its flagship institution.

As the University of Maryland's Public Records Officer, I have seen the number and complexity of requests skyrocket.

In 2023: College Park received 532 requests for 1,703,748 records.

In 2024, that number went up to 582.

In 2025, we're already up to 96 as of Feb 6. We haven't even hit the 96-day mark in 2025.

And though amendments to the statute have been made – with some significantly impactful ones in 2021 – the amendments have generally been one-sided. They've failed to take into account changes in the way people communicate – **EMAIL in particular** — and the nature of the requests themselves. As a direct result, there has been an extraordinarily negative impact on agency operations which ultimately frustrates the letter and spirit of this important statute.

Said differently, it has gotten more and more difficult to provide top notch customer service and abide by the statutory deadlines when you are processing requests that ask for 1000, 10,000 up to 750,000 pages of emails (the largest in my career).

That said, there is one amendment which attempts to provide much-needed relief. However, this now needs additional support. Section 4-1B-04 needs the element “**abusive**” added.

Abusive is not just to the *agency* and its *personnel* handling the request, but also an abuse of the *process* ... and the law.

When you THAT is abusive.

1. Receive 186 requests in a 12-month period from one person.....
 - a. This clogs up the pipeline and undermines the efficient and effective processing of requests. The abuse perpetrated by a few ruins the process for everyone else.
2. Are threatened with physical harm if you do not process a voluminous request within 10 business days.....
 - a. For state employees who are simply doing their best with an operationally restrictive statute and tight deadlines, it is unnerving to be placed in physical danger.
3. Respond to the same request repeatedly because the statute says a request cannot be ignored despite it being harassment.....

By adding the term “abusive” you add a small, but badly needed arrow to the quiver of options agencies have.

On behalf of the University of Maryland, College Park please support HB 806 cross-filed as SB 554.

Thank you.