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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB202: The “Shut the Revolving Door” Act of 2020
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Hearing: Thursday, February 6, 2020, 1:00 PM

The revolving door between public service and lucrative private-sector employment erodes trust in our democracy. Public officials may be influenced, even subtly, by the implicit promise of a lucrative lobbying job after they leave government. This allows special interests to influence government action with inside knowledge unavailable to the general public. Maryland has already enacted several laws to keep former officials from tapping into their inside connections in government for private gain.

Under current law, a former legislator may not assist or represent another party for compensation until the conclusion of the next regular session that begins after a member leaves office. This waiting time is commonly referred to as a “cooling off period.” Maryland is one of 33 states with a one-year delay before officials are allowed to lobby. However, this prohibition only applies to the legislative branch and statewide elected officials, including the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Comptroller, Attorney General, and State Treasurer.

Twenty-nine states apply the prohibition to both legislative and executive branches of government. For example, Florida's law applies to “former public officers,” which includes legislators, former statewide elected officials, and agency heads of an executive branch department of the state.

SB202 would combat the influence of special interests in our government. Maryland would join the majority of states that apply a revolving door prohibition to members of the executive branch. A similar bill, HB 234, passed the House overwhelmingly (107 to 30) in 2015 but never received a vote in the Senate.

I strongly urge a favorable report of SB202.