

TESTIMONY OF SENATOR DELORES G. KELLEY

**REGARDING SENATE BILL 348 - PUBLIC ETHICS - OFFICIALS AND LOBBYISTS -
REPORTING OF CEREMONIAL GIFTS AND AWARDS OF INSIGNIFICANT
MONETARY VALUE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

ON FEBRUARY 20, 2020

Mr. Chairman and Members:

On the evening before the start of the 2018 opening of the General Assembly, I received a plaque at a public reception of the Women Legislators of Maryland Foundation. The plaque was presented by the Maryland Commission for Women.

Several months later, I was advised by the Maryland Ethics Commission that I was out of compliance with the Ethics law because of failing to report my receipt of the plaque, which the donor organization had reported as having a value of \$106.00 (one hundred, six dollars).

I was required therefore to amend my most recent ethics report, using the value of the “gift”, as reported to me by the Ethics Commission staff. I had no independent knowledge of the value of the plaque, never requested it and received the Ceremonial “gift”, at the Calvert House in Annapolis, in the presence of dozens of legislators and at least 150 members of the public.

After being subsequently notified by the Ethics Commission that my failure to report the value of this “gift” was a violation of Maryland’s Ethics law, I decided to discuss the situation with the Ethics Counsel to the General Assembly, who advised that I might want to seek a legislative remedy, so that a member’s acceptance of a “ceremonial gift” would not be subject to required reporting to the Ethics Commission. Senate Bill 348 is here to serve that function, and I therefore urge your favorable report of Senate Bill 348.