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Charles County

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Committee

Joint Committee on Ending Homelessness

Joint Subcommittee on Program
Open Space/Agricultural Land Preservation



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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Testimony in Support of Senate Bill SB 803: Public Ethics- Legislative Unit- Definition

Chair Pinsky and members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:
Thank you for hearing SB803 Public Ethics- Legislative Unit- Definition.

This bill expands the definition of “legislative unit” as it applies to the Maryland Public Ethics Law. Currently the expanded definition applies to an existing provision authorizing the acceptance of food and beverages at meals and receptions to which an entire legislative unit has been invited.

The current law, a “legislative Unit” is defined as the entire General Assembly, either house of the General Assembly, a standing committee, a county or regional delegation of members that is recognized by a presiding officer. There are currently 7 House Standing Committee, 6 Senate Standing Committees, and 12 Recognized Delegations.

SB803 seeks the Inclusion of caucuses in the definitions of a “legislative unit” expands the meal and receptions provisions to the following:

- Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland
- Women Legislative of Maryland
- Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
- Asian American and Pacific Islander Caucus of Maryland

Minorities and women currently make up 35% to 40% of the General Assembly’s legislative body respectively. With the passage of SB803 caucuses will have additional platform to discuss issues and push agendas that will impact minorities and its underserved communities in the state of Maryland, and the bill’s changes can be handled with existing budgeted resources. There is no effect on revenues.

Chair Pinsky and committee members I ask for a favorable report on SB803.

Arthur Ellis

District 28, Charles County