



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB315**  
**Shut the Revolving Door Act of 2020**  
Testimony by Delegate Vaughn Stewart  
February 12, 2020 • Environment and Transportation Committee

The Revolving Door Problem

The revolving door between public service and lucrative private-sector employment erodes public trust in government. First, public officials may be influenced, even subtly, by the implicit promise of a lucrative lobbying job after they leave government. Second, the revolving door allows corporate interests with a powerful means to influence government action unavailable to regular people. The Maryland General Assembly has long understood this problem, passing “cooling-off period” laws to prevent public officials from becoming lobbyists immediately after leaving office.

Why the Committee Should Vote Favorably

Under current law, the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Comptroller, Attorney General, Treasurer, and members of the General Assembly must wait one year after leaving office until they can become paid lobbyists. **While the vast majority of states impose cooling-off periods, Maryland is one of nine states that does not apply this prohibition to executive-branch officials. HB315 extends this one-year cooling-off period to heads of state agencies.** A similar bill passed this committee and the House of Delegates overwhelmingly in 2015, but stalled in the Senate.

Like elected officials, secretaries of state agencies possess knowledge and personal connections that they can monetize on the lobbying market after leaving office. Cooling-off periods combat the influence of special interests in our government and level the playing field for regular people who want their voices to be heard. Because the import of cooling-off periods apply to both elected officials and agency heads, I urge a favorable report.