



TESTIMONY FOR HB 315

Public Ethics - Executive Branch - Lobbying by Former Secretaries of Principal Departments (Shut the Revolving Door Act of 2020)

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Stewart

Committee: Environment & Transportation

Organization Submitting: WISE (Women Indivisible Strong and Effective)

Person Submitting: Sharon Blugis, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE:

I am submitting testimony today in **FAVOR of HB 315** on behalf of **Women Indivisible Strong and Effective** representing over 600 women from the Anne Arundel County area. Although this bill is not one of our legislative priorities for this session, when we were asked to support it and then testify, it was a bill we knew aligned with our mission statement of requiring transparency and accountability from our elected officials and the legislative process. This bill does both.

This is WISE's third legislative session to actively engage, advocate and testify. We quickly learned our voices are not as loud as those of the paid lobbyists - especially those who have just served in a powerful position within a state agency. It's natural for people to listen to "experts" and to take their word over a constituent or even many constituents. As we all know, politics is all about relationships and holding a once powerful position allows them instant access to be able to make their case. This is not how government was designed to work. It makes the opinions of a few drive the legislation for the many, which is exactly the opposite of what the goal of good government is.

The State of Maryland should remove the temptation from a state agency head or government executive who is nearing the end of their tenure and looking for a new job to possibly make accommodations or give favors to potential new employers to get lucrative lobbying contracts.

Maryland has seen enough corruption. We should try to ensure that state employees are focused on doing the jobs we are paying them to do, not looking to use their position as an entrée to a more lucrative job. This bill just makes good sense. WISE supports this bill and we ask, we recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.