



TESTIMONY FOR HB0315

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

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Stewart

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0315 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state. We have over 30,000 members across the state.

We are your constituents who are engaged in the state legislative process. As we have learned about how that process works, we have discovered that it is much harder for the legislature to hear our voices than those of paid lobbyists, particularly those who have recently wielded power as heads of state agencies or in the executive branch. It is natural for legislators to listen to people that they have worked closely with, versus people who are not well known. Those former state executives' words have more weight and the relationships they have built allow them instant access to be able to state 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. Another thing that we think is important to mention is that this prohibition helps cut down on possible self-dealing. A state agency head or government executive who is nearing the end of their tenure and looking for a new job to jump to, could be tempted to 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. The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and we ask, how do Maryland taxpayers benefit from the revolving door? The answer is simple. We don't. We think it's time to make it stop. We recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

