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Ways and Means Committee

Education Subcommittee

Finance Resources Subcommittee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Dear Madame Chair and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

Thank you for your consideration of HB42 Public Information Act – Applications for Inspection – Responses and Time Limits (as amended). This legislation, as amended, changes the timeline for responding to PIA requests from 30 days to 15 days for the first 100 pages of the public record. The custodian of the public record is also required to deny or approve the application within 7 days. With the consent of the applicant, the timeline may be extended.

The enactment of the Maryland Public Information Act 50 years ago was a hallmark for our democracy, and the updates passed by the General Assembly in 2015 were extremely appropriate. Maryland still has the longest wait in the US for requests to be accepted and records produced. Members of the public are still having issues with timely and unfulfilled requests for information. National Watchdog groups suggest that Maryland only adequately responds to about 27% of our PIA requests and that our average wait for these records is 59 days. I believe that Maryland can and should do better. HB42 is only one of the options that you will hear today and I hope that you will consider combining some of these efforts to improve our responsiveness to our citizens.

Delegate Michele Guyton