

February 11, 2020

**Testimony on HB 717**  
**Public Information Act - Required Denials - Distribution Lists**  
**Health and Government Operations**

**Position: Favorable**

Common Cause Maryland supports HB 717, which would expand the types of documents that citizens may access under the Public Information Act ("PIA").

HB 717 would define distribution list to mean a list of recipients who have affirmatively opted to receive information or alerts and narrows an existing requirement pertaining to the denial of inspection of distribution lists. This definition would allow legitimate requests, including requests for distributions lists, to be made available while ensuring that we are shielding valid public information from disclosure.

HB 717 additionally specifies that distribution lists used by a government entity or elected official for the sole purpose of sending informational notices are excluded. This serves the public interest by giving Marylanders confidence that merely seeking community updates are signing up for government alerts will not lead to their contact information being shared with political and commercial interests.

The intent of the PIA is to ensure that Marylanders can be informed about our government. HB 717 does just that while continuing to protect valid information from disclosure.

We urge a favorable report.