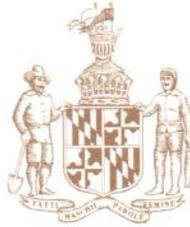


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Testimony in Support of House Bill 701 – General Assembly —Legislative Newsletters – Publication Expenses and Links to Social Media Accounts

Good afternoon Madam Chair and members of the Rules Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you on behalf of **House Bill 701 – General Assembly —Legislative Newsletters – Publication Expenses and Links to Social Media Accounts**

Because the Presiding Officers are providing a system for members to use to send electronic newsletters to constituents through the General Assembly, House Bill 701 clarifies the rules for official and unofficial newsletters.

House Bill 701 establishes that an official electronic legislative newsletter is a newsletter sent using the MGA's newsletter system. An official electronic newsletter may include a link to a legislator's social media account if the account is:

- Used to communicate legislative and constituent content;
- Is not primarily used for electoral purposes; and
- Is not used for economic gain.

Previously, some members sent unofficial electronic newsletters funded through personal funds or campaign funds. House Bill 701 simplifies and clarifies current rules regarding unofficial legislative newsletters by requiring that only campaign funds may be used to pay for these documents. Under current law, in addition to campaign funds, a legislator may use the personal funds of the legislator or the legislator's spouse to pay for the newsletters. Reporting requirements and penalties vary depending on which funds are used. This legislation establishes consistent reporting requirements and penalties by limiting funding for unofficial newsletters to campaign funds.

I respectfully request a favorable report for House Bill 701.