

April 1, 2021

**Testimony on HB 1058**  
**Public Ethics - Disclosures, Training, and Use of Confidential Information**  
**(Integrity in High Office Act)**  
**Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs**

**Position: Favorable**

Common Cause Maryland supports HB 1058 which would greatly expand the disclosure required by Maryland's statewide officials, helping to create greater transparency and accountability in the state.

In recent years, statewide officials have engaged in official actions that have led the public to question decisions made and whether these actions benefit their own economic and financial interests.

HB 1058 present a number of reforms that will strengthen our ethics laws. This includes expanding the list statewide officials required to disclose more information about their sources of outside income to include Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Comptroller, Treasurer, Attorney General, and cabinet secretaries. These officials would be required to disclose information about the companies that have interest in and the subsidiaries of those companies. It would also require submission of disclosure to the Ethics Commission and the MD General Assembly whenever an action would have a financial impact on their business interests.

It also requires officials to disclose the details of relationships with quasi-governmental entities and the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) Corporation which receives a substantial amount of funding from the state. The members of the UMMS board are appointed by the Governor. In 2019, the public was made aware that the health system had done business – millions of dollars of business – with the members of the board. This discovery led to numerous investigations and changes to the overall makeup of the board, but transparency has not been made a priority. HB 1058 seeks to begin shine a light on the work of UMMS by requiring that lawmakers serving on the board to disclose their business dealings is more detail.

Conflicts of interest are cancerous to our democracy. When our elected officials put their personal interests first, they are sending a message to people throughout the state that their needs are not a priority. Conflicts of Interest put elected officials' jobs as public servants and good policy making in jeopardy. HB 1058 would help to prevent ethical lapses and give Marylanders confidence in our statewide officials.

We request a favorable report.