



## Maryland Municipal League

*The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns*

# TESTIMONY

March 25, 2021

**Committee:** House Environment and Transportation

**Bill:** \_\_\_\_\_ SB 4 - Public Ethics - Officials and Employees - Acceptance of Gifts and Prohibited Retaliation

**Position:** Oppose

**Reason for Position:**

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) is now opposed to Senate Bill 4, as a last-minute Senate amendment specifically adds your two local government partners for inclusion in an otherwise reasonable piece of legislation.

We were not opposed to this bill until an amendment specifically targeting the Maryland Municipal League (MML) and the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) was added hours before at the applicable Senate Committee voting session. The amendment including our association was not proposed in the House cross-filed bill (HB 363), nor was it discussed by witnesses in either chambers' bill hearing, leaving no time for respectful discussion with its sponsor(s) or the Committee.

Our association solely represents municipal governments; we do not fund Political Action Committees (PACs), donate to candidates, or endorse candidates for public office. This distinguishes us from the other entities incorporated in the provisions of this bill, and rightfully so. Our association has always been treated like other government service organizations, agencies and departments in regard to ethics requirements. This targeted amendment would also seem to create disparities in Maryland ethics laws applicability, treating larger municipal corporations who hire its own staff differently from those smaller municipalities who depend on our association to fully represent their interests (and our joint constituencies) in Annapolis. The Committee might recall a similar bill introduced and summarily rejected last year for these very same reasons.

This is an unfair and unreasonable amendment introduced without opportunity for public comment from its opponents in a public forum. For these reasons, the Maryland Municipal

League respectfully requests that the honorable Committee strip this provision, or provide SB 4, as amended, with an unfavorable report.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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