

HB363/SB4**Maryland Public Ethics Law – Retaliation for Reporting or
Participating in Investigation – Prohibition**

Good Afternoon,

My name is Jillian Lord. I would first like to say that I am here as a private Maryland citizen and not a State employee. Therefore, anything I claim or state begins with *“I’ve been told”*.

I am **Favorable w/Amendment** of **HB363/SB4** - *Maryland Public Ethics Law – Retaliation for Reporting or Participating in Investigation – Prohibition*.

There are too many State employees, *with integrity*, who have suffered retaliation simply because they tell the truth and refuse to participate in the discriminatory, illegal, and unethical practices, of those in their chain of command.

An employee's fear of retaliation *and* loss of employment for reporting or even *participating* in an investigation is **REAL**. Retaliation is commonly practiced within *many* State agencies, in an attempt to prevent those in authority from being held accountable for their illegal actions. These methods have had the desired effect of keeping most State employees silent and submissive... *so I’ve been told*.

This is why **HB363/SB4** is so important.

This Bill should also help bring accountability and transparency to *all* areas within *every* State agency.

Supporting **HB363/SB4** gives me hope that a Delegate, Senator, or even our Governor will sponsor a Bill that protects State employees even more.

I propose that The Offices of Fair Practice, within State agencies, be stand-alone independent departments whose **entire** staff are designated as career only employees, and not hired by an Appointing Authority or Political Affiliation.

They should be allowed to testify **for or against**, State agencies at E.E.O.C.¹, M.C.C.R.², or State hearings.

It is time for us to **STOP** allowing these perpetrators/victimizers to “*resign*” or “*retire*” without any type of disciplinary action. **STOP** transferring them to other State agencies to protect them from facing their victims at one of these hearings...instead, give the *victims justice*.

In the words of our late John Lewis: "*When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to say something; you have to do something.*"

I am. What about you?

Thank you.

¹ Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

² Maryland Commission on Civil Rights