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Appropriations Committee

*Subcommittees*

Capital Budget

Chair, Transportation and the  
Environment

Oversight Committee on Personnel



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Maryland Transparency Act of 2021 (HB 344)

Testimony of Delegate Marc Korman—Favorable with Amendments

Thank you Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair, and the members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. I come before you today to discuss the Maryland Transparency Act of 2021 (HB 344). Maryland has made great progress in transparency, and it is important to build on that and continue to institute live video streaming and other transparency measures to more state and local institutions. Marylanders deserve access to the information discussed at these public meetings, regardless of their ability to physically attend the meeting.

This committee has previously voted to require numerous state agencies to video stream their meetings including the State Board of Elections; the Maryland Stadium Authority; and the public Service Commission. Rather than continuing to come before you each year and enumerate specific agencies or boards that warrant transparency, the Maryland Transparency Act of 2021 establishes consistent practices for Local Boards of Elections and other State government bodies subject to the Open Meetings Act. HB 344 will require these entities (but not county or municipal government entities) to:

- Post all meeting materials at least 48 hours in advance;
- Indicate on the agenda whether a closed session is anticipated;
- Provide live video-streaming of the public portion of meetings;
- Discuss meeting minutes in a timely manner;
- Share meeting minutes on their website within two business days of approval;
- Authorize the Open Meetings Compliance Board to enforce the requirements; and
- Implement these provisions by:
  - October 1, 2021 for those with five or more employees; and
  - October 1, 2022 for those with fewer than five staffers.

We are working on several clarifying amendments to address the concerns of stakeholders that have been raised.

If the General Assembly can stream its meetings and publicize materials, other government bodies should be able to comply as well. The Maryland Transparency Act of 2021 would increase transparency and allow the public to access government, regardless of the meetings' locations. The legislation provides tremendous benefit at a minimal cost to the state and taxpayers. I urge you to support the Maryland Transparency Act of 2021 to keep Maryland moving in the right direction in the field of government transparency.