



# HARFORD COUNTY DEPUTY SHERIFF'S UNION

Incorporated 1989  
PO Box 881, Bel Air, Maryland 21014

Maryland House of Delegate Judicial Committee

February 5, 2021

Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair

House Office Building

6 Bladen Street Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: House Bill 120 – Public Information Act – Personnel Records

Dear Delegate Clippinger and Distinguished Members of the Judicial Committee,

On behalf of over 300 members of the Harford County Deputy Sheriff's Union, I respectfully ask that you NOT-SUPPORT House Bill 120.

House Bill 120, or similarly proposed bills, have the potential to be severely abused and cause unintended consequences that would not only ripple through our ranks, but our communities.

Personnel files are confidential in most businesses, to include law enforcement and legislators. This of course does not include criminal or integrity violations, as they are grounds for release and dismissal in law enforcement. Most personnel files that would be subject to release are smaller policy infractions such as when a police officer has been counseled or reprimanded. This counseling is intended to help a young or senior officer improve. If HB 120 were to pass, anyone for any reason, could request a personnel file of a police officer and no matter how small the infraction, being late for work or submitting a late report, could be misconstrued and framed that the officer has no regard for his or her job. That just would not be a correct assessment or right in any line of work.

Currently, law enforcement does a good job of documenting personnel issues and identifying patterns that need to be addressed for remedial training, mediation, or termination. These circumstances are currently well documented to illustrate the improvements made or needed. If this bill was passed, documenting an officer's weaknesses could be career threatening.

No officer, or legislator, is perfect and we all need guidance and improvement. If this bill were to pass, the personal issues documented in personnel files would be highlighted and exaggerated and possibly used for nefarious political motives.

Therefore, on behalf of the members of the Harford County Deputy Sheriff's Union, I am requesting the members of the Judicial Committee to vote UN-FAVORABLY in support of House Bill 120.

Sincerely,

[Aaron Penman](#)

Aaron Penman, President

Harford County Deputy Sheriff's Union

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