

February 5, 2021

House Committee on the Judiciary  
Room 101  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Judiciary Committee Members:

We are writing to you and submitting this letter as written testimony in advance of your hearing on February 9 in support of HB 120, the Personnel Records – Investigations of Law Enforcement Officers (Anton’s Law) bill introduced by Delegates Acevero and Barron.

As members of the Takoma Park Presbyterian Church and in response to our understanding of the gospel, we are active in anti-racism work including efforts to redefine public safety and transform policing. Our church has an active Committed Racial Mindfulness group and also sponsors Presbyterians for Police Transformation. We realize that the movement for racial justice, including the much-needed transformation of policing in this country, requires our state to enact stronger police screening, training, and accountability measures.

HB 120 and its Senate companion bill (SB 178) would clarify that records relating to an administrative or criminal investigation of misconduct by law enforcement officers are not personnel records for purposes of the privacy provisions of the Public Information Act. We believe the State of Maryland and its county and municipal jurisdictions need urgently to adopt standardized, comprehensive and transparent data collection systems to assist in identifying problems and developing solutions that foster public safety and racial justice. That broader goal would be completely stymied without first passing SB 178 to make misconduct information available to the public.

Transparency is an essential first step in service of police accountability. We therefore urge you to move this legislation forward without delay and without weakening amendments.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

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