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Testimony in support of Bill HB0120, Public Information Act - Personnel Records - Investigations of Law Enforcement Officers (Anton's Law)

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TO: Chair Clippinger and members of the House Judiciary Committee

From: Nicholas Marinelli

Law enforcement is stretched thin across the entire country. Every day, police officers are thrust into difficult situations, many of which they don't have the proper training for. This often puts the officers in a position where they put themselves and others in danger that could have been otherwise avoided if someone with a more specialized skill set was deployed to support those officers.

Such was seemingly the case with the death of Anton Black in September 2018. At 19, Anton was more or less still a child, and his life was tragically cut short in an altercation with the police. It's been reported that Anton was severely mentally ill, and was unusually aggressive with the officers.

It's possible that this tragedy could have been avoided. It's possible that if mental health specialists could have been deployed to deescalate the situation in a non-violent manner. Alternatively, it's possible that there was no route for a peaceful resolution, and that the death was unavoidable. While all of these things are possible, it's currently **not possible** to do a thorough independent review of the incident to determine what lessons should be learned, because records relating to the incident are sealed away from public access.

HB0120 would grant greater access to these records, allowing a multidisciplinary collection of experts to analyze tragedies like Anton's, and enabling them to formulate plans to prevent it from happening in the future. The review may show that the officers were justified, it may show that they needed support that they didn't have, or it may show that the officers committed an egregious offence in their actions. Whatever it shows, that information will help better shape policy and procedure going forward, creating a safer environment for citizens and law enforcement alike.

I wholly support HB0120, and encourage you to do the same.



Nicholas Marinelli