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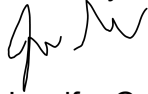
**Testimony in support of Bill HB0120, Public Information Act - Personnel Records -
Investigations of Law Enforcement Officers (Anton's Law)
05 February 2021
To: Chair Clippinger and members of the House Judiciary Committee
From: Jenn Ganss**

Law enforcement officers have a dangerous, high stress job that forces them to wear many hats. Often, they are forced to act as mediators, counselors, and mental health providers as part of their duty. And here in Maryland, many officers also face an additional challenge working in communities that lack trust in their efforts. I support HB0120 as a measure that can help communities and law enforcement officers rebuild their relationship with one another, and ultimately keep Maryland residents and officers safe.

The passing of HB0120 would allow multidisciplinary experts access to the records that detail officers' actions and processes--and determine, from an unbiased perspective--pain points that would benefit from improvement, and help prevent tragedies such as Anton Black's death in the future. A 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' actions were disproportionate to the issue at hand. Regardless of the outcome, the review would include a learning opportunity for everyone--but only if they have access to the information.

Information can provide closure and is an important first step that helps families--and communities--build trusting relationships with local law enforcement. Twenty-nine other states--including Alabama, Georgia, and Arizona--already make police disciplinary records more available to the public than Maryland. I support HB0178 and hope that Maryland will become #30 in our nation to make information more transparent and accessible. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Ganss