

Arielle Juberg  
Baltimore, Maryland  
District 8

Testimony in Support of Bill HB0120, Personnel Records – Investigations of Law Enforcement Officers (Anton’s Law)

To: Chair Clippinger and members of the House Judiciary Committee

From: Arielle Juberg

My name is Arielle Juberg. I am a resident of Baltimore County in District 8. I belong to Showing Up for Racial Justice in Baltimore. I am also a church member and volunteer. I am testifying in support of HB0120, Personnel Records – Investigations of Law Enforcement Officers (Anton’s Law).

This committee and the General Assembly overall has a small but distinct window of opportunity to improve public safety and begin to restore public trust in institutions, including law enforcement. The time for incremental changes has passed; we need bold choices that the moment requires.

The current Maryland Public Information Act considers police misconduct investigations as "personnel records" and thus not available for request. Victims of police misconduct, local reporters, and the general public cannot access these records for details of how investigations of complaints of police misconduct were handled. Police need community oversight. Secrecy undermines community trust in police. This is a time when police departments should be mending and improving their relationships with the communities they are sworn to protect. *If police departments are investigating officer misconduct thoroughly, there should be nothing to hide.*

This legislation takes important steps to shine the light into a process that has been hidden from view for too long. It is important to note that reforming the MPIA would allow police departments to consider everyone’s privacy — including officers and residents — before releasing any information. It is also vital that unsustained complaints are covered, since they comprise the vast majority (90%) of investigations.

I am typically proud to call myself a Maryland resident. However, I am ashamed that Maryland ranks among the **least** transparent states with regard to police misconduct complaints. Twenty-nine other states make disclosure of complaint files more accessible to the public. I request that you commit to reforming the MPIA because police accountability on a local level is impossible without it.

For all these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report for Bill HB0120.