HB0120 -- Support
Public Information Act – Personnel Records – Investigations of Law Enforcement Officers (Anton's Law)
Maryland House of Delegates Judiciary Committee

Chair Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Takoma Park Mobilization supports *HB0120, Public Information Act – Personnel Records – Investigations of Law Enforcement Officers (Anton's Law)*, and urges a favorable committee report.

Takoma Park Mobilization is a grassroots advocacy organization with a network of over 2,500 in and around Takoma Park, Maryland that works to enact local, state, and national policies and laws that ensure equal justice for all, with special attention to the treatment of people of color, immigrants, and other vulnerable individuals in our communities.

HB0120 extends the provisions of the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) to records of administrative or criminal investigations of misconduct by a law enforcement officer, including an internal affairs investigatory record, a hearing record, and records relating to a disciplinary decision. The statute rules that such records may not be considered personnel records for MPIA disclosure purposes.

These are important reforms. "Sunshine laws" such as the MPIA, by providing standards and establishing procedures that maximize public access to government information, sustain fairness, accountability, and due process. They are a foundation for good government and must be comprehensive. **Maryland's exceptional Public Information Act treatment of law enforcement misconduct-investigation and disciplinary records must be eliminated.**

HB0120 would enhance public-safety transparency by applying to Maryland law enforcement, disclosure rules already applied to similar non-law enforcement records. It would advance accountability by eliminating exceptions that shield misconduct from public and press visibility. By opening investigation records to public scrutiny, HB0120 will both encourage better policing -- an essential goal -- and boost public trust in law enforcement and law enforcement disciplinary actions.

HB0120 is important legislation that would improve law enforcement performance and build public trust. Takoma Park Mobilization urges a favorable HB0120 committee report and General Assembly enactment.

Submitted for Takoma Park Mobilization by Seth Grimes, seth.grimes@gmail.com, 301-873-8225
February 5, 2021