



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0178
PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT – PERSONNEL RECORDS – INVESTIGATIONS OF LAW
ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS (ANTON’S LAW)**

Bill Sponsor: Senator Carter

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0178 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state with well over 30,000 members.

Police officers have enjoyed rights that we, as citizens, don't have. We gave them special rights because of the nature and difficulty of the job that they do. We expected that those rights would be respected, but we have come to discover that in some cases, those rights are being used as a shield to hide reprehensible conduct.

We need transparency when the rights of citizens have been disregarded by the very people sworn to protect them. Only then can we maintain the trust that the population must have for those who serve and uphold the law.

We understand the need to keep personnel records safe and private. However, when an investigation into the conduct of a police officer is underway, those records should be available in order to provide transparency and ensure that the investigation is fair and unbiased. We believe they should not be shielded, but be openly available. This bill would ensure that complaint records against a police officer are no longer considered personnel records, and would be available to the public. We think this is an important step forward in terms of transparency.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.