

February 9, 2021

Carol Stern  
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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HBI20/SBI78**

**Public Information Act - Personnel Records - Investigations of Law Enforcement  
Officers (Anton's Law)**

**TO:** Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary, and members of the Judiciary Committee

**FROM:** Carol Stern

My name is Carol Stern and I live in Chevy Chase in District 16. Thank you for recognizing the urgent call of thousands of Marylanders, who have raised our voices in the streets asking for meaningful changes to policing to be passed during this legislative session.

My Jewish tradition teaches me that destroying one life is akin to destroying the entire world. In a world already filled with so much violence, we must move to end police violence and change Maryland laws that prevent us from holding police accountable.

The Maryland Coalition for Justice and Police Accountability has called on the General Assembly to pass five specific and impactful reforms. Reforming the Public Information Act to allow disclosure of all complaints of police misconduct is a key change needed to reform our justice system.

19-year-old Anton Black's death was the direct result of Officer Webster's excessive use of force - an officer with nearly 30 use-of-force complaints from prior incidents. Officers like Webster, with 10, 20, 30, or more complaints of misconduct, are only able to remain in their positions due to the shroud of secrecy covering their pattern of practice. Should HBI20/SBI78 be passed, it would make publicly available the complaints against officers and would force chiefs and commissioners who want to avoid public outrage to address it expeditiously. That increased accountability would reduce the likelihood of police abuse, violence, and even murder of the residents they are sworn to serve and protect.

Jewish tradition says that we are called to be partners in the creation of a more perfect world — in this time that call is louder than ever. Passing Anton's Law is a step towards that more

perfect world we must create together. **I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB120/SB178.**