

Michael T. Coco  
2615 Huntingdon Ave  
District 43

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF Bill # HB0120 - Public Information Act – Personnel Records – Investigations of Law Enforcement Officers (Anton’s Law)

February 9<sup>th</sup> 2021

TO: Chair Clippinger and members of the House Judiciary Committee  
FROM: Michael T. Coco

Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Michael Coco I live in Baltimore City, Maryland, and I am writing to support Public Information Act – Personnel Records – Investigations of Law Enforcement Officers (Anton’s Law) – HB-0120.

Police accountability on a local level is impossible without passage of this legislation.

Police need community oversight. Secrecy undermines community trust in police, at a time when police departments should be mending and improving their relationships with the communities they are sworn to protect.

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. Even in conservative states, like Alabama, Georgia, and Arizona, police disciplinary records are generally available to the public.

When you file a complaint of police misconduct, you cannot find out how the department investigates your complaint. All you can find out is the outcome and any discipline; you cannot find out whether the department conducted a thorough or lackluster investigation of your complaint. This is because the complaint file is considered a “personnel record” under Maryland’s Public Information Act, and personnel records may never be disclosed.

I urge you to support HB0120. Transparency is necessary for community trust.

Thank you.

Michael T. Coco

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