

To: Members of the Maryland House Judiciary Committee
From: Jonathan W. Hutto, Sr., Prince George's People's Coalition
Re: Testimony in Support of HB 0120-Anton's Law (MPIA Reform)
Date: February 5th 2020

I hope this message finds all of you in the best of health and good spirits. My name is Jonathan W. Hutto, Sr., and I serve as Chairperson for the Prince George's County People's Coalition comprised of Grassroots Organizations along with Laypersons concerned. I'm formally submitting my written testimony in support of SB 178-Anton's Law (MPIA Reform).

The state of Maryland ranks among the least transparent states in regards to police misconduct complaints. Twenty-nine other states make disclosure of complaint files more accessible to the public. Even in so-call conservative states such as Alabama, Georgia, and Arizona, police disciplinary records are generally available to the public.

Once a citizen in our state files a complaint of police misconduct, they are unable to access the adjudication process in relation to their complaint. The only information they can obtain is the disciplinary outcome; one is unable to assess whether the department conducted a thorough or lackluster investigation of their complaint. This is due to the complaint file being considered a "personnel record" under Maryland's Public Information Act, and personnel records may never be disclosed.

As an example of the reactionary application of this ethic, within Prince George's County we are struggling to obtain the investigatory files in regards to the case of Archie Elliott, III., a 24-year old unarmed African-American Male murdered by Prince George's Police in June 1993. Nearly 30 years later, his mother Dorothy is still struggling to obtain those files in her son's case which is moral and ethical disgrace.

We are pushing for the expeditious and timely passage of this bill as a "Common-Sense" measure designed to build the trust of our citizens in the Civilian Oversight Process of our Law-Enforcement which must be made stronger, more transparent and accountable to the citizenry which funds it.

Pressing Ever Onward,

J.Hutto, Sr.
Prince George's People's Coalition

