



March 29, 2023

Senate Bill 540

**Human Relations - Civil Rights Enforcement - Powers of the Attorney
General**

House Judiciary Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 540 - Human Relations - Civil Rights Enforcement - Powers of the Attorney General. This Bill would authorize the Attorney General to investigate, prosecute, and remediate certain civil rights violations, to intervene in certain causes of action, establish penalties and authorize the Attorney General to obtain relief in civil actions, conciliation agreements, and settlement agreements, and recover investigation and litigation costs.

This legislation provides an important tool for the investigation and enforcement of civil rights violations that goes beyond the ability of the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights, which handled over 2,000 complaints last year. By enabling the Attorney General to investigate discrimination in mortgage lending, check-cashing and fraudulent business practices, and authority to enforce federal and state civil rights laws, this Bill will enable the investigation of discrimination in instances where individuals may not be aware that they were victims of discriminatory practices, as well bring Maryland in line with its neighboring jurisdictions. Funds collected in enforcement actions would go to investigation and prosecution efforts, as well as education and outreach, expanding the scope and effectiveness of civil rights enforcement.

For all of these reasons, Anne Arundel County respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 540.