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Capital Budget

Oversight Committee on Personnel

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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Maryland State Transparency Act of 2023 (HB 58)
Testimony of Delegate Marc Korman—Favorable with Amendments

Thank you Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. I come before you today to present the **Maryland State Agency Transparency Act of 2023 (HB 58)**. The legislation builds upon legislation of the same name from 2020 and 2022, which successfully laid the foundation for transparency standards applied to a number of Maryland's governing boards, and quasi-government agencies. The 2023 legislation will extend those transparency standards to the State Ethics Commission.

The requirements include:

- Live video or audio streaming of meetings.
- Posting meeting materials 48 hours in advance, including each open meeting agenda, any finalized documents, and any written testimony.
- Posting meeting minutes within two days of their approval at a meeting.

The State Ethics Commission is responsible for administering the Maryland Public Ethics Law. The Commission reviews financial disclosure statements and sets standards of conduct for State and local government officials and employees. Given the Ethics Commission's vital role in maintaining the integrity of our public officials, it is necessary that we expand transparency measures to provide Marylanders with reliable access to the commission's public meetings.

The legislation does not change the various Open Meetings Act exceptions that will allow the Ethics Commission to go into closed session at the appropriate time. The bill simply provides that those portions of a meeting that are in open session be live streamed. A typical meeting of the Ethics Commission includes approximately one hour in open session followed by two hours of closed session.

We are submitting two amendments for your consideration. The first specifies that the Ethics Commission is entitled to receive support from the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) in handling the technical aspects of live streaming meetings. The second amendment moves the effective date from October 1 to July 1.

The Maryland State Agency Transparency Act of 2023 will continue to propel Maryland in the right direction in the field of government transparency. I urge a favorable report.