

**STATEMENT IN SUPPORT
OF
HB 1166 Omnibus Procurement Reform Act (“OPRA”) of 2023**

The Canton Group encourages a favorable report on HB 1166.

The Canton Group is a small, minority owned business with headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland that specializes in information technology system modernization, maintenance and support. We have a long successful history and track record of working with Maryland state and local governments dating back to 2002. During this time, we have transitioned from a subcontractor to a prime contractor for the majority of the work that we provide. As such, we have been directly impacted by, and been witness to, failures by agencies to adhere to Maryland procurement law.

Our work with state and local agencies is typically awarded through competitive procurement processes which are costly in and of themselves. When procurement officials fail to adhere to procurement rules, there is little feasible recourse that can be taken by small, minority owned firms due to the costs involved with pursuing protests, appeals and other legal actions. Large corporations have the financial and legal resources to protest and appeal procurement decisions at their discretion. The Canton Group seeks to create an equitable playing field for small and minority businesses through the support of House Bill 1166.

House Bill 1166 includes Section 15-221.1 that takes a progressive step towards addressing this inequity by allowing the MSBCA to award attorney’s fees for the filing and pursuit of a bid protest in which the MSBCA sustains (i.e. agrees with) the protest – and makes a finding that the agency violated a procurement law or regulation. There is no inherent risk to the State by agreeing to this provision as it helps to hold the Government accountable for its actions and provide small and minority businesses with an opportunity to regain costs incurred for the betterment of Maryland State Government and its citizens.

Please give HB 1166 a favorable report.

For more information contact:

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