

**HB 996 - Consumer Protection – Consumer Council – Name Change and Other Modifications**  
**Economic Matters Committee**  
**February 27, 2024**  
**Favorable**

Chairman Wilson, Vice-Chair Crosby and members of the Economic Matters Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 996. This bill will change the name of the Consumer Council to the Consumer Protection Commission and allow members to receive a per diem as appropriate and allowable. This testimony is submitted on behalf of current Council members: Sarah Ackerstein Klein, Stephanie Baker, Leah Perry, Bridgette A. Greer, Angie Barnett, Linda Dorsey-Walker, Saif Rehman, and Robin McKinney.

The Consumer Council is a standing entity that is appointed by the Governor that advises the Consumer Protection Division of the Attorney General’s Office. It undertakes studies and reports, and fosters cooperation among federal, State and local agencies, and private groups. The council includes representatives of consumer interests, business interests, and the public.

The name change to Consumer Protection Commission will create a clear alignment and connection with the Consumer Protection Division. The Council believes that the below definition of a commission is more reflective of how it works and its overarching goals.

A commission is a group of people who are entrusted by a government to carry out a task. Sometimes the task is a specific one (like ascertaining a particular fact or resolving a particular problem) and sometimes the task is more long-term.

A commission is usually distinct from other kinds of agency in two ways:

1. It has no single, permanent administrator, and
2. It has no independent or constitutional authority of its own—
  - a. It operates under the authority of another part of the government.<sup>i</sup>

The Council has recently finished a strategic planning process and will be researching the consumer impact on topics such as weight loss supplements, used car dealers, and warranty companies. The Council looks forward to continuing to be a voice for consumers to the Maryland Attorney General and the public.

***Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for HB 996.***

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<sup>i</sup> <https://painintheenglish.com/case/3801> Paul\_Rodriguez Feb-04-2009