



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY by Senator C. Anthony Muse

SB 177: Law Enforcement Officers, Correctional Officers, and Court-Ordered Services Providers – Prohibition on Sexual Activity – Penalties and Registry

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Vice Chairman, and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. Senate Bill 177 would prohibit a law enforcement officer, correctional employee, or a court-ordered services provider from engaging in sexual activity with a person that is in their custody.

Also, if convicted, SB 177 would change the act to a felony instead of a misdemeanor and the defendant would be subject to imprisonment up to 10 years or a fine up to \$3,000 *or both*.

Colleagues, no one that is in the custody of an officer, while they are in their official capacity, should be forced or subjected to any sexual contact. We cannot tolerate these heinous offenses and behavior by persons who take an oath to protect the community. Delegate Nicole Williams has presented this bill before the legislature over the last two years after several unfortunate incidences happened in her district, which include:

- In 2018, a six-year veteran officer forced an undocumented Latina woman into engaging in a sexual act in exchange for evading a ticket or arrest.
- In 2020, an officer from a local municipality sexually assaulted a 19-year-old woman while in custody after a traffic stop.
- In October of 2022, a Maryland Sheriff was charged with second degree rape and assault of an individual while in custody.

In closing, there are a thousand wonderful things I can highlight about our officers across the state of Maryland, but unfortunately the small number of officers that commit these crimes reduce the public's trust. SB 177 would hopefully deter law enforcement officers, correctional officers and or a court ordered service providers from committing such a disgraceful crime.

Therefore, I urge this committee for a FAVORABLE report for SB 177.