



TESTIMONY FOR HB0302

Law Enforcement Officers, Correctional Employees, and Court-Ordered Services Providers - Prohibition on Sexual Activity - Penalties and Registry

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Embry

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0302 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Law enforcement officers have lost the confidence of the public. We understand that their jobs are very difficult and dangerous. It is the few who abuse power that have destroyed the reputation of the many brave men and women who serve. It is critical that those who abuse the power that they have should be harshly reprimanded so that the public can feel confident that law enforcement officers are policing their own.

This bill, if enacted, would alter the penalty for a law enforcement officer who engages in sexual activity with someone who is a victim, witness, or suspect they are investigating; someone who requested assistance from law enforcement; or someone who is in their custody. What was previously a misdemeanor would now be a felony with up to 10 years in prison and a \$3,000 fine. This would also cause the law enforcement officer to register as a sex offender.

Our members feel that this is an important deterrent to abuse of power in such a personal and horrifying way. We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.