



To: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

From: Tim Nelson, Counsel to the Maryland-DC-Delaware Broadcasters Association

Date: Submitted - February 9, 2026; Hearing - February 11, 2026

Re: Senate Bill 144

The Maryland-DC-Delaware Broadcasters Association (“MDCD” or the “Association”) appreciates the opportunity to submit this written testimony regarding Senate Bill 144, “Public Information Act - Personnel Records of Elected Officials and Joint Ethics Committee Records,” which legislation would expand the scope of public inspection of records pertaining to investigations of misconduct by public and/or election officials and matters before the State Ethics Commission and the Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics. On behalf of the Association and its Members, which include approximately 20 television stations and 110 radio stations, MDCD urges a favorable report of Senate Bill 144.

The Maryland-DC-Delaware Broadcasters Association is a voluntary, non-profit trade association that advocates for the interests of its member radio and television stations and, more generally, the interests of broadcasting in Maryland, Delaware, and Washington, D.C. One of the central, critical roles the MDCD’s member stations perform is to inform the public about the actions of Maryland’s public bodies, figures, and officials. As the United States Supreme Court has recognized, “[b]eyond question, the role of the media is important; acting as the ‘eyes and ears’ of the public[.]”¹

As such, MDCD has long advocated for transparency in government and measures that seek to expand rights of this State’s citizens to access public records, including records created by and/or relating to any government agency, legislative body, or political representative, regardless of political affiliation or point of view. Senate Bill 144 would increase transparency in government to the benefit of all Marylanders by (1) establishing that certain records of the State Ethics Commission and the Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics are subject to public inspection under the Public Ethics Law, and (2) potentially making available for public inspection certain records pertaining to investigations of misconduct by certain public officials (including elected officials).

The Maryland-DC-Delaware Broadcasters Association appreciates Senator Folden’s leadership on this issue and urges a favorable report of Senate Bill 144.

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¹ *Houchins v. KQED, Inc.*, 438 U.S. 1, 8 (1978).