

SB0144 RichardKaplowitz\_FAV

02/11/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

**TESTIMONY ON SB#/0144- POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Public Information Act - Personnel Records of Elected Officials and Joint Ethics Committee Records**

**TO:** Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0144, **Public Information Act - Personnel Records of Elected Officials and Joint Ethics Committee Records**

Politico has declared that *Election officials grapple with a brain drain as threats rise - Two new reports portend a potentially bleak future for an American democracy that counts on its engaged citizenry to do everything from count votes to make laws.*<sup>1</sup>

Increasingly violent threats toward and harassment of public officials — from county clerks up to the president — are driving more and more of those figures out of their jobs, a particular concern among local election officials, who have struggled with attrition for years.

In recognition of the problem from increasing political polarization creating a threat to our public officials from unhinged individuals and groups this bill is being submitted. Maryland can commit to protection of those who serve the public by shielding their personally identifiable information.

This bill will establish that certain records of elected officials are not personnel records for the purposes of inspection under the Public Information Act; and establishing that certain records of the State Ethics Commission and Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics are available for public inspection under certain circumstances.

It will not protect those who abuse public trust by unethical conduct in every case but will protect our other public servants providing more peace of mind that doing their jobs is not opening themselves and their families to possible harm.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#/0144.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.politico.com/news/2026/02/03/election-officials-threat-midterms-00761210>