

HB1360_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
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TESTIMONY ON HB#1360 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Maryland Public Ethics Law - Regulated Lobbyists - Reporting Requirements

TO: Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and members of the Government, Labor and Elections Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#1360, **Maryland Public Ethics Law - Regulated Lobbyists - Reporting Requirements**

This bill will make the activities of registered lobbyists more open and transparent by requiring public notification on what activities they engaged in to influence legislators and legislation in Maryland.

Lobbying plays a crucial role in shaping public policy and decisions that affect a wide range of industries, from healthcare to energy to education. Understanding the intricacies of lobbying, how it functions in the political system, and why it matters is key to navigating the political landscape—especially in Maryland. In Maryland, lobbying plays an integral role in shaping state policy. The state’s diverse economy—ranging from tech and defense industries to agriculture and healthcare—creates a complex landscape of competing interests. Lobbyists represent these interests, advocating for policies that support business growth, environmental protection, education reform, and more. ¹

What is Lobbying?

Lobbying is the act of attempting to influence decisions made by government officials, such as lawmakers and regulators. The goal of lobbying is to advocate for specific legislation, regulations, or policy decisions that align with the interests of individuals, businesses, or organizations. Lobbying can take many forms, from direct meetings with legislators to public campaigns that generate community support for a cause. While many people associate lobbying with corporate interests, it is also used by non-profits, advocacy groups, and even ordinary citizens to voice their opinions and push for change.

¹ <https://www.mannoandassociates.com/post/understanding-lobbying-what-it-is-how-it-works-and-why-it-matters-in-maryland>

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This bill will add to the current reporting requirement of lobbyist's activities adding reporting on a list of each matter on which the regulated lobbyist performed lobbying activity, including:

- a description of the lobbyist's position on each matter
- each bill number or a description of each legislative action on which the lobbyist performed lobbying activity.
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This expanded data reporting will permit both supporters and opponents to legislation have a fuller and more comprehensive picture of what is proposed and arguments for and against it.

This bill will alter the dates by which a regulated lobbyist must file a certain report to the State Ethics Commission; and alter the contents of the report to include a list of each matter on which the regulated lobbyist performed lobbying activity, a description of the lobbyist's position on each matter, and each bill number or a description of each legislative action on which the lobbyist performed lobbying activity.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB1360.