



**Maryland | Delaware | DC Press Association**

P.O. Box 26214 | Baltimore, MD 21210

443-768-3281 | [rsnyder@mddcpres.com](mailto:rsnyder@mddcpres.com)

[www.mddcpres.com](http://www.mddcpres.com)

To: House Government, Labor & Elections Committee

From: Rebecca Snyder, Executive Director, MDDC Press Association

Date: January 26, 2026

**Re: HB 304 – Public Information Act – Data Manipulation**

The Maryland-Delaware-District of Columbia Press Association represents a diverse membership of newspaper publications, from large metro dailies such as the Washington Post and the Baltimore Sun, to hometown newspapers such as the Star Democrat and Dorchester Banner, to publications such as The Daily Record, Baltimore Jewish Times, and online-only publications such as the Baltimore Banner, Maryland Matters and Baltimore Brew.

We are pleased to support HB 304. This bill stipulates that a new public record would not be created even if the request requires data manipulation, or other technological work to produce the record. Currently, some custodians interpret the PIA to mean that database records can be shielded from information requests because the original data must be compiled or put into a searchable or analyzable format for the record to be meaningful. This bill comes directly from recommendations from the Public Information Act Compliance Board's Annual Report (see page 54, Recommendation 3 at [https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/AG/GP4-1A-04\(d\)\\_2025.pdf](https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/AG/GP4-1A-04(d)_2025.pdf)).

The PIA lags behind technology and does not fully address electronic databases. This bill would correct the language of the PIA to be more firmly in line with the spirit of the PIA. Reporters often request records from databases to inform their investigative work and should not be denied simply because the data must be manipulated to be readable and accessible. The Press Association urges a favorable report.



**We believe a strong news media is  
central to a strong and open society.**