



BILL NO: House Bill 15
TITLE: Public Information Act - Public Records - Nonprofit Organizations
COMMITTEE: Government, Labor and Elections
HEARING DATE: February 10, 2026
POSITION: UNFAVORABLE

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that works to lead diverse community partners toward the common purpose of reducing the occurrence and impact of intimate partner violence. **MNADV urges the Government, Labor and Elections Committee to issue an unfavorable report on HB 15.**

House Bill 15 would fundamentally change nonprofits' legal status regarding public transparency and data management. It is an unfunded mandate that creates significant administrative and legal burdens. It treats a small nonprofit the same as it treats a large nonprofit, such as a hospital. Grant agreements are already written with provisions to assure the proper use of public funds, and most are essentially 'reimbursable' contracts requiring documented performance before incremental disbursement of funds. This bill is an overreach.

House Bill 15 expands the definition of a "public record" to include documents made by any nonprofit receiving \$50,000 or more annually in state grants or bond proceeds. This means a private nonprofit could be legally forced to respond to broad information requests from the public, just like a government agency. Nonprofits already suffer from funding that does not cover administrative costs. This requirement would be prohibitive for many nonprofits, requiring an unfunded position or positions to manage the bills requirements.

In HB 15 the definition of a public record is very broad, and sensitive correspondence or data related to donors and vulnerable populations served by these nonprofits could inadvertently become subject to public disclosure. It could also require disclosure of Board meeting minutes. It might even eventually make nonprofits subject to open meeting laws.

The net effect of HB 15 is likely to cause some smaller nonprofits to cease to exist and do the work that fills the gaps that state government is not managing to address. This in turn may end

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up costing more to the state than any purported vital transparency the bill purports to be seeking.

We commend you the MANO's testimony for even more problematic issues with this bill.

For all of the above reasons, **MNADV strongly urges an unfavorable report on HB 15.**

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