



BILL NO: House Bill 1360
TITLE: Maryland Public Ethics Law - Regulated Lobbyists - Reporting Requirements
COMMITTEE: Government Relations, Labor and Elections
HEARING DATE: March 6, 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 this Committee to issue an unfavorable report.**

For a solo lobbyist at a nonprofit, HB 1360 (2026) shifts lobby reporting from being a "business burden" to a "mission-critical" threat. This bill effectively taxes our most limited resource: time.

As a small nonprofit that advocates in Annapolis, we are busiest from January through April—testifying in committees, mobilizing grassroots supporters, and meeting with legislators and their staff. We draft testimony, follow bills, travel to and from Annapolis. We respond to legislators asking for assistance, to come testify, to fix bill language, etc.

HB 1360 this new reporting requirement falls right as the session is heating up. Larger organizations have compliance officers or legal counsel to handle this; we would have to stop our advocacy work to pull data and file "under oath." Every hour spent on the State Ethics Commission's portal is an hour we are not able to address the actual work we are trying to accomplish to the detriment of our issues and of the citizens of Maryland.

HB 1360 requires a level of granularity that is difficult for a solo practitioner to maintain. As of the drafting of this bill, we are tracking over 100 bills, although on many we are not taking a position at this point. For reporting purposes, if we end up missing one bill inadvertently (say because we were only watching the bill but then a legislator calls to ask a question, invites us to testify, etc. so we had minimal contact), we are subject to fines, in an already tight budget as most small nonprofits have. For a nonprofit, a "public ethics violation" or a fine—even a \$10-per-day late fee—can be a PR nightmare that scares off donors or board members.

For further information contact Laure Ruth ■ Public Policy Director ■ 301-852-3930 ■ lruth@mnadv.org



HB 1360 tightens the rules on reporting expenses: if we you organize a "Lobby Day" or a small rally, the new rules make it harder to generalize those expenses. You must be much more precise about how much of our nonprofit's budget went toward "influencing" versus "education." We do not have the funds to purchase sophisticated tracking software that might help with reporting.

Because the author of this testimony has no support staff, I am the designated lobbyist and the filing officer. Under the oath requirement in HB 1360 I am personally signing off on the accuracy of these highly detailed reports. Large firms have "checks and balances" where a second set of eyes reviews the data. As a solo, an honest clerical error on a bill number becomes a personal legal liability. I do my absolute best to be as accurate as possible. But it takes time. Mid-February and mid-March do not afford me the luxury of extra hours to meet the conditions of HB 1360.

Adding additional onerous reporting will not fix what the bill is trying to address, and will cripple one person shops like this author. For a small lobbying firm with several clients, it may be even more difficult to manage, taking time away from actually doing the job they were hired to do.

For all of the above reasons, **MNADV strongly urges an unfavorable report on HB1360.**