



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0346**  
**Civil Actions – Violation of Constitutional Rights (No Kings Act)**

**Bill Sponsor:** Senators Waldstreicher

**Committee:** Judiciary

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Aileen Alex, Cochair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting this testimony in support of SB0346 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are an association of unpaid citizen advocates—individuals and grassroots groups in every district across the state—representing and supporting more than 30,000 Marylanders.

SB0346 creates a clear civil cause of action for individuals whose constitutional rights are violated by someone acting in an official capacity. Marylanders should not lose their ability to seek justice simply because a violation occurs at the state or local level rather than under federal jurisdiction. This bill closes that gap and ensures that constitutional protections are meaningful and enforceable.

We support SB0346 because it:

- **Expands Legal Recourse:** The bill defines “law” broadly to include the U.S. Constitution, the Maryland Declaration of Rights, and the Maryland Constitution, ensuring that no loophole exists for state-level violations of fundamental rights.
- **Enables Meaningful Justice:** By authorizing damages, declaratory relief, and injunctive relief, SB0346 provides real remedies—not symbolic ones—for people whose rights have been infringed.
- **Removes Financial Barriers:** The bill allows courts to award reasonable attorney’s fees and expert witness fees to a prevailing plaintiff. Without this provision, most Marylanders would never be able to hold powerful officials accountable, no matter how serious the violation.

In the current environment, I personally feel an increasing need to exercise my First Amendment rights—to speak openly, to advocate, and to participate fully in civic life. I would feel more secure doing so knowing that the protections in this bill are in place. SB0346 ensures that when Marylanders engage in constitutionally protected activity, they can do so without fear that a violation of their rights will leave them without recourse.

This bill directly supports the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. Our work is grounded in transparency, equity, and civic empowerment. Ensuring that residents can defend their constitutional rights—and that government actors are held accountable when they violate them—strengthens democratic integrity and protects the civil liberties of all Marylanders. SB0346 reinforces the principle that government must serve the people, not stand above them.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on SB0346.