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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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SPONSOR TESTIMONY
HB 1511 – Public Safety – Clearinghouse for Missing Persons
March 10, 2026

Good afternoon, Madame Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

For the record, I am Delegate Anne Healey, and I am seeking your favorable support for HB 1511 – Public Safety – Clearinghouse for Missing Persons.

HB 1511 reintroduces last year's Clearinghouse for Missing Persons bill, which passed both the House and Senate unanimously with a neutral fiscal note.

The bill changes the term "*Children*" to "*Persons*" and moves the clearinghouse from the Family Law Article to the Public Safety Article. That change—from children to persons—means missing adults are now included within the reporting requirements.

The legislation was originally drafted with a neutral fiscal note, mindful of the fiscal challenges the state has faced in recent years.

Last year, the bill was amended to require a study of the Department's capacity to report to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs). That study has been completed, and an amendment has been drafted to remove that language from the bill as passed last year.

The study is included in this year's fiscal note and outlines the administrative demands associated with reporting to NamUs. That study was informational and separate from the function of this bill.

One clarification regarding the study: it references the Missing Persons Clearinghouse, which exists as a unit within the Maryland State Police. However, the statutory language

in the code refers specifically to the Clearinghouse for Missing Children, which established the current statutory reporting requirement in the code today. HB 1511 updates that statutory language to require a clearinghouse for missing persons. While the unit has the capability to address missing persons cases more broadly, the statutory language is currently limited to children.

According to the National Institute of Justice, sixteen states currently require certain cases to be entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, although those mandates vary. Maryland does not currently require reporting to NamUs. This bill establishes a clear reporting requirement for missing adults in Maryland. It does not require reporting to NamUs.

Our public safety partners continue to support this bill.

HB 1511 closes the gap in Maryland law by ensuring missing adults are included in the state's reporting structure and for these reasons, I request a FAVORABLE report on HB 1511.

Thank you.