



**Testimony for the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental
Affairs Committee
February 5, 2020**

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**SB 123 - Maryland Transportation Authority – Video Streaming and
Archiving – Open Meetings**

FAVORABLE

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The ACLU of Maryland supports SB 123, which would require the Maryland Transportation Authority (“MTA”) to live video stream its meetings on the internet, and make the recordings available to the public online for a minimum of four years.

Under Maryland’s Open Meetings Act:

- a) It is essential to the maintenance of a democratic society that, except in special and appropriate circumstances:
 1. public business be performed in an open and public manner; and
 2. citizens be allowed to observe:
 - i. the performance of public officials; and
 - ii. the deliberations and decisions that the making of public policy involves.¹

The public has great interest in the business conducted by the MTA. However, it is often inconvenient and burdensome for members of the public to regularly attend agency meetings, because of timing, mobility challenges, lack of transportation, and other barriers. The public should be able to stay apprised of MTA’s activities by observing discussions and decision-making processes.

Transparency is a valuable tool for ensuring civic participation and government accountability. Other state government bodies, including the Maryland General Assembly, already live stream their hearings and meetings. State agencies should be held to the same standards of transparency and public access. This bill is an important step toward making Maryland state government more accessible to residents across the state.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB 123.

¹ Md. Code Ann., State Gov’t § 10-501 (West).



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