

HB360/SB283

Ethics and Accountability in Government

Good Afternoon,

I would first like to say that I am here as a private Maryland citizen and not a State employee. Therefore, anything I claim or state begins with **“I’ve been told”**.

The title of this bill, **Ethics and Accountability in Government**” immediately caught my attention and gained my support even before I knew of its contents.

However, I have since read and re-read the information contained within, and while I agree with the intent of this bill, I do not believe that it covers those who need the most monitoring, such as *“State employees”* who obtained their jobs due to political appointment, or those who serve at the pleasure of the

Appointing Authority, for example:

- Executive Directors
- Commissioners
- Chief of Staff
- Secretary
- and other positions throughout State agencies known by different names and titles

...because most of these “employees”, not all, are only in their positions for as long as their political parties or sponsors are in office, and they normally don’t receive or qualify for any retirement or pension benefits after they’ve completed their term with the State, so this will not affect them in any way.

Therefore, **this bill should also include the means of IMMEDIATELY removing these types of “employees” from their positions, regardless of their political affiliations, sponsors or whomever placed them in their jobs.**

This will send a loud and clear message to those who got their positions due to:

- Cronyism
- Favoritism
- Nepotism
- Political affiliations, etc.

...that we will no longer turn a blind eye to corruption and unethical practices.

This bill, also does not address those who have been convicted, reprimanded or even fined for discriminatory practices, in whatever form that takes. These are issues that should be openly acknowledged, addressed and discussed.

Many of your citizens, who are immigrants, minorities and State employees experience or have experienced the following on almost a DAILY basis simply

because they call attention to the **hypocrisy** of the actions carried out by those who hold positions and titles such as the ones I previously named, myself included.

- Bullying
- Coercion
- Discrimination (**to include salary discrimination**)
- Hostile work environment
- Harassment
- Intimidation
- Ostracism
- Public degradation, and
- Retaliation – which can range from character assassination, retaliation via Performance Evaluation Plans aka PEP reviews, up to the termination of an employee

Unethical practices by management , where words such as “*property of the State*” are illicitly used by those in authority to confiscate, seize and suppress evidence and supporting documentation, in order to cover up their illegal activities (*so I’ve been told*).

Therefore, in order to have a comprehensive bill that truly seeks out the best interest of the citizens of Maryland, State employees, and Representatives, everything I've stated should be taken into consideration.

It is said that we must first remove the **beam** out of your own eye, and then you can see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye.

This bill (HB360/SB283) should be re-vamped with these concerns in mind.

Remember, there are bulletins and posters that cover the walls of State agencies throughout Maryland, such as:

1. Help Stop Fraud in MD State Government
2. Maryland Equal Pay for Equal Work
3. Standards of Conduct for Executive Branch Employees *aka* Executive Order (01.01.2015.08)
4. Whistleblower Law
5. What You Should Know About Maryland Whistleblower Protection

... that tells us to report, see something /say something, yet when this is done those of us who do...encounter retribution, reprisals and retaliation.

Sometimes, it may be slow, swift, subtle or overt but it eventually comes to anyone that dares to speak out.

However, there will always be individuals like me (your shy introverts) who will rise up, stand up and speak up because of the ongoing corruption, discrimination, illegal activities and unethical practices from individuals like you.

That being said, the question on every private citizen's mind is whether or not you will pass this bill As-Is...or will you take a **bold** stand and make the necessary modifications.

Finally, I would like to leave you with one of my favorite quotes from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "***The Ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of Comfort and Convenience, but where he stands at times of Challenge and Controversy.***"

Thank you.