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Appropriations Committee

Subcommittees

Capital Budget

Chair, Transportation and the
Environment

Oversight Committee on Personnel



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Maryland State Agency Transparency Act (HB 421)
Testimony of Delegate Marc Korman-- Favorable

Thank you Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair, and the members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. I come before you today to discuss the Maryland State Agency Transparency Act. The legislation will institute transparency measures for the public meetings of certain state agencies. As you may recall, this committee passed legislation during the 2019 session, entitled the State Board of Elections Transparency Act (HB 71). The Senate companion bill was signed into law by the Governor. The legislation required the State Board of Elections to implement several transparency measures.

The Maryland State Agency Transparency Act expands these transparency measures to the following state entities that have significant budgets and an outsized impact on our State's well-being and economy:

- Emergency Number Systems Board (ENSB -- the 9-1-1 Trust Fund);
- Maryland Stadium Authority;
- Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO);
- Maryland Transportation Authority (MdTA); and
- Public Service Commission (PSC);

The legislation will require these entities to post their meeting agendas at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting, provide a video livestream of the meeting, and post their meeting minutes online within two business days of approval of the meetings. The bill also includes changes to the State Board of Elections transparency measures by conforming it to the standards for this year's bill. These measures would not apply to executive sessions, only public portions of the meetings.

Let me also note that the Committee already passed HB 72, Delegate Carr's bill to live video stream the Maryland Transportation Authority. Delegate Carr and I have coordinated on these bills.

Maryland has made great progress in transparency, and it is important to build on that and continue to institute live video streaming and other transparency measures to more state agencies. Marylanders deserve access to the information discussed at these public meetings, regardless of their ability to physically attend the meeting. The legislation provides tremendous benefit at a minimal cost to the state and taxpayers. I urge you to support the Maryland State Agency Transparency Act to keep Maryland moving in the right direction in the field of government transparency.