

SB 178 Anton's Law MPIA – Maryland Public Information Act (Reform) – Favorable

January 18, 2021

My name is Marion Gray-Hopkins. Thank you for the opportunity to submit my written testimony for SB 178. I am a lifelong resident of Maryland, a registered voter, President of Coalition of Concerned Mothers, an organization of grieving mothers, many who have loss children to police terrorism. I am also a member of the Prince Georges County Peoples Coalition for Justice, member of Maryland Coalition for Justice and Police Accountability, board member of ACLU Maryland and a supporter of many other local and national ally organizations who are fighting for police reform. My son, Gary Hopkins, Jr. at the young age of 19 was a casualty of police terrorism, more than 21 years ago on November 27, 1999. The fight for justice, accountability and transparency has been a long time fight and journey for me and so many others. Police misconduct has been an issue in Maryland for decades and continues to plague communities across this country with little to no accountability or transparency. We have lost trust in law enforcement and a way to bridge the gap and begin rebuilding the relationship in the communities they serve is to be transparent. Police departments are paid by our tax dollars and because of that the complainant and the community should be given full disclosure when complaints are made (all aspects of the investigation). Even more concerning is 90% of complaints made against officers by the public are not sustained. We are not asking for personnel info. What we are asking for and should know is that our complaints are being handled equitably and fairly for ALL people; that appropriate actions are being taken based on the complexity/seriousness of the complaint.

If there is nothing to hide and complaints are being handled properly, why not share the information. It will help with identifying “the few bad apples” while restoring community trust.

We MUST apply greater focus on the issue of police terrorism and legislation such as Anton’s Law SB 178 is a step in the right direction. As a mother, grandmother, law abiding US citizen, and a voice for many mothers, we are tired of losing our children to excessive use of force, many of which result in unjustifiable homicides, being harassed, racially profiled, brutalized, and disrespected by those who are paid and sworn to protect and serve the community. What we are seeing is law enforcement being protected by laws that unfortunately don’t protect us, the tax payers. This is not a fair and just practice and therefore I ask that you do the right thing and vote favorable in support of Anton’s Law SB 178.

Thank you!