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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB178/HB120

Public Information Act - Personnel Records - Investigations of Law Enforcement Officers (Anton's Law)

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Jeffrey Rubin

My name is Jeffrey Rubin. I live in Potomac in District 15. This testimony is in support of SB178/HB120, Anton's Law.

Just and effective law enforcement that serves the needs of everyone is critical for a thriving civil society. We recognize the many challenges of police work and appreciate the efforts of the police officers who have dedicated themselves to this service.

The ability of the police to perform their job is severely compromised when the behavior of individual officers causes the public to lose faith in the department. Questions inevitably arise when mistreatment or serious harm occurs to residents during their interactions with the police. In such instances, public confidence in the police force is strengthened by providing to the public, and especially to those most directly affected, information in response to complaints of job-related misconduct made against a law enforcement officer. Otherwise, trust in the police department and public safety will suffer.

Law enforcement officials should take heed of the damage done to the credibility of the Catholic Church by the reluctance of its leaders to hold accountable the small fraction of its workforce who abused members of the public. This institutional failure was due to a systemic unwillingness to share information, track patterns of misbehavior, and discipline offenders. Police departments across the country suffer a loss of public confidence when they engage in similar practices.

It is incumbent on legislators to ensure that complaints alleging misconduct by police officers are investigated thoroughly, that information is shared with those most directly affected and the public, and that police officers are appropriately held accountable. **For all these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report for SB178/HB120.**