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District 9B

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 178, Public Information Act – Personnel Records –  
Investigations of Law Enforcement Officers (Anton’s Law)

1/21/2021

TO: Chair Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Ben Webber

Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, my name is Ben Webber, I live in Ellicott City, MD, and I am writing to support Anton’s Law, SB 178.

Anton’s Law would prevent the continuation of injustice throughout law enforcement departments in Maryland, and allow Maryland to join the majority of states that do not classify complaints against officers as protected personnel files. 90% of complaints against officers made by the public are not sustained, which damages Marylanders’ trust in those officers. Transparency of investigative procedures is necessary to prevent repeated cases of flagrant officer misconduct, sometimes criminal misconduct, only for them to be acquitted long after the investigation has been determined unsustainable. This helps no one but the unsustainable officers, and harms members of the community, primarily people of color. After the global outcries throughout 2020, this legislation can no longer wait. It must be enacted now if trust in Maryland law enforcement is to be rebuilt.

I urge you to support SB 178 and help ensure that Maryland’s law enforcement is being held to the highest standards of conduct. If you do not want the bad apples to spoil the bunch they must be removed. And as with cancer the only way to treat the disease is to properly identify, detect, and expose the problem.

-Ben Webber