



January 19th, 2021

Testimony on SB0178
Public Information Act - Personnel Records - Investigations of Law Enforcement Officers
(Anton's Law)
Judicial Proceedings Committee

Position: Favorable

As a member of the Sunrise Movement, a youth movement fighting to solve the climate crisis and to remedy historical injustices, I am urging the committee to support Anton's Law. The climate crisis cannot be addressed without addressing racial injustice. In turn, racial injustice cannot be addressed without addressing police misconduct.

As we have seen in the George Floyd protests that swept the country last summer - and the peaceful protests in Baltimore - racial justice requires holding police accountable for inappropriate conduct. However, as we see with devastating regularity, opaque internal investigations into police misconduct does not lead to justice for victims

The cycle of over-policing of black and brown communities continues when justice is not served. This cycle disempowers communities, especially young people of color. Our local hub, Sunrise Movement Baltimore, endorses this bill to ensure that important records are brought to light because we understand that police misconduct disproportionately affects young people of color that we look to for leadership in coalitions fighting for justice.

The injustice that young people of color face in police misconduct is also a climate issue. When black and brown youth suffer at the hands of police brutality, the entire community is impacted. These impacts further complicate communities' access to resources and capacity to fend off industrial polluters who regularly use their power to declare neighborhoods of color as "sacrifice zones" for toxic pollution. White communities that are not overpoliced have more resources to successfully fight off the polluters causing the climate crisis. To address environmental injustice, we must listen to and empower young people of color in their own communities.

When personnel records of police accused of misconduct are not accessible, there is less accountability and young black and brown folks do not get justice. I stand with the young black and brown leaders and organizations from Baltimore leading the way on racial and climate justice, and recognize their primacy on this issue. I support the call for a number of reforms that move towards justice, not least of which is to increase police accountability and transparency through Anton's Law.

We encourage a FAVORABLE report for this important legislation.