



TESTIMONY TO THE HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

HB 395 - The Transparency in Public Records Act of 2022

POSITION: Support

BY: Nancy Soreng, President

DATE: February 15, 2022

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation at all levels of government. The League further believes that governmental bodies must protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible.

This bill expands the definition of "public record" to include any written, electronic, or recorded audio or video communication made in connection with the transaction of public business. This includes communication made by both public officials and state employees. It also expands the definition of "unit of government" to include the office of the governor.

Under current Maryland law, every unit of state government must have a record retention plan. HB 395 further clarifies this requirement. The best way to ensure that public officials are acting in the best interest of the public is to make sure that official interactions between elected officials, government agencies and state employees are transparent.

We urge a favorable report on HB 395.