



TESTIMONY: HB157 – Open Meetings Act – Advance Notice of Meeting – Agenda Support
House Health and Government Operations Committee
29 January 2014

The *Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care Reform* is a nonpartisan, statewide alliance of thousands of individuals and 99 organizations. Today we are testifying in support of **HB157 – the Open Meetings Act – Advance Notice of Meeting – Agenda.**

Maryland, appropriately, takes pride in the core principle that the work of its government should be open and transparent and should reflect the best interests of the state's residents. Current statute, therefore, requires that there be a reasonable notice in advance of all meetings of a "public body." This is critically important to ensure that Marylanders have an opportunity to make their voices heard.

The proposed legislation takes this an important step further by requiring that agenda items to be discussed and/or decided upon are available to the public in advance of the meeting. By so doing, it further supports the goal of transparency even as it ensures that Marylanders have the information they need to provide their expertise and perspective on issues that impact their lives.

The Coalition, in representing the interests of Maryland's consumers on issues relating to health care reform, believes that this provision is long overdue. Therefore, we applaud the sponsors of this bill and urge a favorable report by the Health and Government Operations Committee.

Submitted by Leni Preston, Chair – leni@mdchcr.org 301.351.9381