

State of Maryland

Commission on Civil Rights



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February 8, 2017

Testimony Regarding: MCCR Budget Hearing Position: Concur with Governor's Allowance

To the Members of the Senate Health & Human Services and the House Health & Human Resources subcommittees:

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the Department of Legislative Services Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Analysis. We would like to thank our assigned analyst, Ms. Sierra Boney, for her thorough analysis. While the current budget realities and resulting spending plan present challenges, we believe it is responsible.

The recommended spending plan will preserve the opportunity for MCCR to meet its production standards because no currently filled staff reductions will occur. In fact, productivity has already increased as a result of targeted staff training coupled with the gained experience of recent Civil Rights Officer (investigator) hires. In addition, our recently instituted processing efficiencies are yielding positive results on the number of days to complete case closures. Intake continues to trend upward, as detailed in our FY 2016 Annual Report, which we attribute to (1) the hiring and training of case processing staff, as well as (2) the connections being made by the Education & Outreach Unit (E&O) around Maryland. Of particular note, in FY 2016 E&O held 147 events, trained 4,544 individuals, and provided outreach to approximately 8,600 individuals at functions and programs with state agencies, business, and organizations throughout the state.

While we have had significant reductions in staffing since FY 2002, please note that any future reductions in full staffing levels will have a debilitating impact on the service delivery of the agency. The current staffing levels at full productivity enables the agency to meet its federal contracts and obligations. Even a singular reduction would threaten this balance and jeopardize the agency's sustainability in maintaining its relationship with our federal partners.

In closing, MCCR respectfully requests the Subcommittee's support in concurring with the Governor's allowance for MCCR in his FY 2018 budget.

Background: The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (formerly the Maryland Commission on Human Relations) is the State agency responsible for the enforcement of laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and state contracts based upon race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, and physical and mental disability.

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