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**Maryland Commission on Civil Rights
Fiscal Year 2026
Operating Budget
Response to Department of Legislative Services Budget Analysis**

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
Health & Human Services Subcommittee
Senator Cory V. McCray, Chair
January 24, 2025

House Appropriations Committee
Health & Social Services Subcommittee
Delegate Emily K. Shetty, Chair
January 29, 2025

To the Members of the House Health & Social Services Subcommittee and the Senate Health & Human Services Subcommittee:

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the Department of Legislative Services Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Analysis. We want to thank our assigned analyst, Ms. Nathaly Andrade, for her thorough analysis. The recommended spending plan will provide an opportunity for MCCR to meet its production obligations with our federal partners while making significant progress in reducing the number of backlogged complaints pending assignment to an investigator.

In FY2024, MCCR recruited and filled five new staff positions including four investigators and one supervisor. It was anticipated that these PINS would allow MCCR to reduce the number of backlogged complaints, which at the time was 267. However, record numbers of inquiries – 1,900 in FY2023 and 1,761 in FY2024 which translated into 661 and 676 charges taken, respectively – continued to have a direct and substantial impact on MCCR's case processing metrics. As of today, MCCR has approximately 490 backlogged complaints awaiting investigation. While an increase from last year, this is still lower than the high of 600 backlogged complaints seen since FY2020.

The addition of 12 new PINS for investigations included in the Governor's allowance is mission critical. As of FY2025, MCCR had 39 positions. For comparison, in FY1989 MCCR had approximately 100 staff members. MCCR expects the number of inquiries and complaints to sharply rise in the immediate future as our constituents look to the State of

"Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination."

Maryland for protection from unlawful acts of discrimination, hate, and bias. Once filled and trained, these 12 PINS will be integral to MCCR's efforts to both reduce and eliminate the current backlog. Without these PINS, MCCR forecasts the backlog to grow to as high as 800 complaints.

Reducing and eliminating the backlog is MCCR's top priority in FY2026. The Commissioners and staff at the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights know that the timely investigation of these complaints is vital to identifying and eliminating unlawful discrimination in Maryland while securing meaningful relief for victims deserving to be made whole. MCCR is fortunate to have among its ranks incredibly passionate staff committed to both the mission and vision of our agency. MCCR would not be in as strong a position today without their professionalism and dedication.

In closing, we thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony, as well as for your support of the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights over the years. MCCR respectfully requests the committee's support of the Governor's FY2026 Allowance. MCCR also notes and will submit to the committees its report on the impact of these new positions on case assignment and backlog management by the December 15, 2025, deadline.