

within the provisions of any of these subtitles] may make, sign and file with the Human Relations Commission (hereinafter referred to as the "Commission") a complaint in writing under oath. The complaint shall state the name and address of the person, firm, association, partnership, corporation, State agency, department or board alleged to have committed the act of discrimination together with the particulars thereof; and the complaint also shall contain such other information as may be required from time to time by the Commission.

(b) Whenever the Commission has received reliable information from any individual or individuals that any person has been engaged or is engaged in any discriminatory practice within the scope of this article, and after a preliminary investigation by the Commission's staff authorized by the Chairman or *vice-chairman* [a majority of the Commission] it is satisfied that said information warrants the filing of a complaint, the Commission, on its own motion, *and by action of not less than four Commissioners*, may issue a complaint in its name in the same manner as if the complaint had been filed by an individual.

16. Confidential Investigation.

(a) During the investigation of *any* complaint[s] *alleging a violation of Section 11, 11B, 17, 18, 19, or 23 of this Article*, and until said matters reach the stage of public hearings, the activities of all members of the Commission and employees thereof in connection with said investigation shall be conducted in confidence and without publicity, and the Commission shall hold confidential any information in relation thereto, *including the identity of the complainant and the respondent, except that*

(i) *Any information may be released at any time if the release has been agreed to in writing by both complainant and respondent; and*

(ii) *This section shall not apply to the release of information by the Commission or any employee thereof to the General Assembly or any committee or member thereof acting in his official capacity or to any local, state, or national commission and/or agency or governmental authority having legally invested authority to implement or recommend the implementation of public accommodations, fair employment, fair housing or similar laws. ; AND*

~~(III) THE IDENTITY OF THE COMPLAINANT MAY BE DISCLOSED TO THE RESPONDENT AT ANY TIME.~~

(B) ANY MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION OR EMPLOYEE THEREOF, WHO VIOLATES THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION SHALL BE GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR, AND UPON CONVICTION THEREOF SHALL BE FINED NOT MORE THAN \$1,000.00 OR IMPRISONED NOT MORE THAN ONE YEAR OR LESS. BOTH.

17. Declaration of policy.

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the State of Maryland, in the exercise of its police power for the protection of the public safety, public health and general welfare, for the maintenance of business and good government and for the promotion of the State's