



Maryland Association for Justice, Inc.

2021 Position Paper

HB 308 - Courts – Civil Actions – SLAPP

SUPPORT

The Maryland Association for Justice (MAJ) supports HB 308 which modernizes the existing SLAPP statute, Courts §5-807, by modifying Maryland’s law to be consistent with other SLAPP statutes in other jurisdictions.

During the shortened 2020 Legislature, the MAJ worked with Del. Rosenberg and other supporters to modify the proposed SLAPP proposed bill to remove objectionable portions and improve it. HB308 incorporates all those changes.

SLAPP actions are, as the acronym implies, a strategic lawsuit against public participation. Some litigants file a SLAPP lawsuit intended to suppress a citizen’s expressing free speech and criticism. SLAPP statutes exist in 29 states to protect people from lawsuits with this goal of suppressing free speech by providing for expedited motions to dismiss and awards of attorney’s fees. See <https://anti-slapp.org/your-states-free-speech-protection/#scorecard> [pdf 10/24/2017, attached].

HB 308 updates the Maryland law to provide better protection for free speech rights by discouraging litigants from commencing lawsuit with the suppressive intent.

The MAJ requests a FAVORABLE Committee Report.