

**Bill Number: HB 502**

**Edward J. Coyne, Deputy State's Attorney for Carroll County  
Opposed**

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF EDWARD J. COYNE,**  
**DEPUTY STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR CARROLL COUNTY**  
**IN OPPOSITION TO HOUSE BILL 502**  
**COLLECTION AND PUBLICATION OF PROSECUTORIAL**  
**INFORMATION**

I write in opposition to House Bill 502, because of the enormous fiscal impact it would have on our budget for data that is available from other existing sources.

This bill would require the Carroll County State's Attorney to increase the office budget between seven hundred thousand dollars (\$700,000) and one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per year. The bill would require us to hire two additional staff members, an attorney, and an IT staff member. The bill would also require us to create a web-based computer database with all of the 44 data criteria for every case and every hearing. Our office handled approximately 6000 cases with 15,00 hearings in 2020. Our employees would have to review each case at every hearing to input data under the 44 categories. The bill would increase labor and technical costs for the office at a time of budget uncertainty in our County with the COVID crisis, anticipated increase in the County's obligation to fund education under the Kirwan Education bill (pending veto override in the Senate) and the anticipated costs associated with body worn cameras.

This bill would also unnecessarily enlist the State's Attorney in every local jurisdiction to collect data that is already largely available from existing sources. MDEC, which is administered by the Administrative Office of the Courts, already collects the vast majority of data in proposed section 15-502. All but three jurisdictions have MDEC. In addition, the Maryland Sentencing Guidelines would be able to capture much of the data for the vast majority of Circuit Court cases. The bill would require every local State's Attorney's Office to create a web-based database to capture the data every time there was activity in a case. The Maryland Judiciary Case Search is an existing tool that could be modified to collect the additional data that is sought by the bill. Unlike the bills requirement of 24 separate databases, Case Search would allow for a uniform statewide platform that could still permit comparison among jurisdictions.

There is simply no compelling reason to pass this bill to collect duplicate data, especially when the overwhelming and crippling costs are considered.

The Carroll County State's Attorney's Office joins the Maryland State's Attorneys' Association in requesting that this committee give HB 502 an unfavorable report.