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DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Judiciary Committee

*House Chair*  
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Legislative Ethics



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
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HB66 – CIRCUIT COURTS AND DISTRICT COURTS – DISHONORED CHECKS –  
SERVICE CHARGE

**FAVORABLE**

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon and members of the Judiciary Committee

HB66 pertains to an increase in the service fee an individual pays for a dishonored check. Dishonored checks are a regular occurrence in any mandated fee process. It is not unheard of that someone will write a bad check to an agency. As a resolution, most agencies have a processing fee for dishonored checks.

Service charges for dishonored checks reflect the labor intensity of processing bad checks. When an agency processes a bad check it requires retroactive actions from the agency from internal bookkeeping, interagency cooperation to ensure that the treasury or any other related agencies are aware that the check will not clear. The service charge also hopefully serves as a deterrent for those who write bad checks.

The service charge has not been changed for bad checks written in Circuit or District Courts since 1978, (45 years ago.) According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics 10 dollars in 1978 was the equivalent of \$47.49 in 2022. [https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm) Almost \$50.00! You will hear from the clerks as to how the increase reflects the cost of labor that is required from the courts. You will also learn that the increase would not disproportionately affect indigent clients of the Office of Public Defender.

Of note, the state's Comptroller's Office fee for dishonored checks is \$30. Raising the fee for dishonored checks written to the courts will be in accordance with other Maryland Agencies.