

# **SB 575 Court Personnel - Protection of Personal In**

Uploaded by: Eric Luedtke

Position: FAV

*STATE OF MARYLAND  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR*



**WES MOORE,**  
GOVERNOR

STATE HOUSE  
100 STATE CIRCLE  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1925  
(410) 974-1801  
TOLL FREE 1-800-811-8136

TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

Dear Chairman Smith and Vice-chair Waldstreicher,

On behalf of Governor Wes Moore, I urge a favorable report of SB575/HB664, Court Personnel - Protection of Personal Information, the Judge Andrew F. Wilkinson Judicial Security Act.

This legislation would allow judges to request that their personal information, or the personal information of their families, not be published or otherwise made available to the general public. The legislation also sets penalties for a person who knowingly publishes a judge's personal information, and establishes a Judicial Address Confidentiality Program in the Administrative Office of the Courts' Office of Information Privacy.

Judges have long been the targets of violent acts and hostile behavior. Despite the enactment of federal legislation protecting federal judges, the personal information of Maryland judges remains exposed and they remain vulnerable. This is a matter of life or death, and we must not wait any longer. Judge Wilkinson spent his career in defense of justice. Unfortunately, he was left defenseless on October 19, 2023, when a disgruntled litigant took his life in front of his own home. Keeping our communities safe is one of the Moore-Miller Administration's guiding principles. Our judges are public servants on the frontline every day ensuring the safety of our communities. We must in turn ensure that we are doing all within our power to protect them from bad actors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Luedtke".

Eric Luedtke  
Chief Legislative Officer  
Office of Governor Wes Moore

**MLTA SB 575 proposed favorable recommendation. .pd**

Uploaded by: Mark Glazer

Position: FAV



1783 Forest Drive, Suite 305, Annapolis, MD 21401 | (443) 620-4408 ph. | (443) 458-9437 fax

**To:** Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee  
**From:** MLTA Legislative Committee  
**Date:** January 30, 2024 [Hearing date: January 31, 2024]  
**Subject:** **SB 575**– Court Personnel - Protection of Personal Information (Judge Andrew F. Wilkinson Judicial Security Act)  
**Position:** **Favorable**

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The Maryland Land Title Association (MLTA) is a professional organization working on behalf of title industry service providers and consumers, and is comprised of agents, abstractors, attorneys, and underwriters. MLTA **SUPPORTS** SB 575.

Through the creation of the Office of Information Privacy in the Administrative Office of the Courts, the settlement industry is provided with a mechanism to obtain shielded information that may be needed to complete the settlement on any real property purchases or other transactions in which members of the judiciary may be participants.

MLTA understands and supports all reasonable efforts to protect judges and other court personnel. We believe this legislation will strikes the correct balance in these efforts. MLTA urges a favorable report on SB 575

# **Judge Andrew F. Wilkinson Judicial Security Act -**

Uploaded by: Myles Hicks

Position: FAV

**STATE OF MARYLAND  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**



**WES MOORE.**  
GOVERNOR

STATE HOUSE  
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(410) 974-3901  
(TOLL FREE) 1-800-811-8336

TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Luedtke", written over a light gray rectangular background.

Eric Luedtke  
Chief Legislative Officer  
Office of Governor Wes Moore

# **SB 575 Sen Corderman Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Paul Corderman

Position: FAV

PAUL D. CORDERMAN  
*Legislative District 2*  
Frederick and Washington Counties

Budget and Taxation Committee

*Subcommittees*

Capital Budget

Education, Business and Administration



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800-492-7122 Ext. 3903  
Paul.Corderman@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 31, 2024

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Chair Will Smith  
Vice Chair Jeff Waldstreicher  
2 East  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill SB 575 – Court Personnel – Protection of Personal Information  
(Judge Andrew F. Wilkinson Judicial Security Act)**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, & Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present SB75 Court Personnel – Protection of Personal Information (Judge Andrew F. Wilkinson Judicial Security Act). In October of 2023, the Washington County community and most notably, the Wilkinson family, suffered an unimaginable tragedy when Circuit Court Judge Andrew F. Wilkinson was murdered in the driveway of his own home. Left behind is his beloved wife, Stephanie, as well as their two children, Caroline & Grant. This vicious attack on a member of the Maryland Judiciary leaves an indelible mark on our state, and it warrants immediate action to protect not only our judicial officers, but also their families, in the hope that a similar incident can be avoided in the future.

SB 575 authorizes the Office of Information Privacy in the Administrative Office of the Courts to request that a governmental entity or person not publish personal information of certain protected individuals on the internet, social media, or social networks. Additionally, this bill provides a process of removing existing personal information that is displayed on the internet, social media, or social networks. If the information that was requested to be removed is not, there are civil and potential criminal penalties for an offending party.

These threats are real, they happen to real people, they have happened in our state, and they happen and affect the families of the judicial officers who serve our communities. Members of the Maryland Judiciary serve because they care deeply about their communities and our state, despite the additional safety risks associated with their role. As legislators, it is our obligation to support legislation that protects both them and their families from the most harmful situations. Thank you for your consideration as I respectfully ask for a favorable report on SB 575.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul D. Corderman".

Paul D. Corderman  
District 2 – Washington & Frederick Counties



# **SB0575 - Judge Andrew F. Wilkinson Judicial Securi**

Uploaded by: Stephanie Wilkinson

Position: FAV

January 29, 2024

Good Afternoon, Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Stephanie Wilkinson. I am the surviving spouse of Judge Andrew F. Wilkinson.

I am writing to ask you to support SB0575, the Protection of Personal Information (Judge Andrew F. Wilkinson Judicial Security Act).

At a minimum, we know the man who murdered my husband began searching the internet for information on him in July 2023. If specific measures had been in place, somebody using a credible commercial solution could have prevented this with an alert to the proper authorities. Such a program does exist to help protect our judiciary and others like you. However, passing this bill is the first step.

I am devastated that I lost my husband, but my heart is beyond broken that my children have lost their father. Naturally, I do not want others to suffer a preventable work-related attack if the capability exists.

Our family is the victim of an attack on a cornerstone of our country - our judicial process. If we do not step in and offer our judiciary the protection and privacy they should have, we will surely water down the strength of the judicial system by getting less qualified candidates to fill the positions.

Judges from all over the United States, even a United States Supreme Court Justice, have reached out to me with condolences. Eyes from across the nation are on this matter. Therefore, I hope you and your committee members take the first step in raising the bar to protect our judiciary members with the support of this bill. I also trust that by doing so, my children will know that their father did not die in vain.

Thank you for your consideration and please know you may reach out to me with questions for more specific details.

Warm Regards,

Stephanie Wilkinson

**SB 575 MOPD FWA.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Elizabeth Hilliard

Position: FWA



**NATASHA DARTIGUE**  
PUBLIC DEFENDER

**KEITH LOTRIDGE**  
DEPUTY PUBLIC DEFENDER

**MELISSA ROTHSTEIN**  
CHIEF OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

**ELIZABETH HILLIARD**  
ACTING DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

### **POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

**BILL:** SB 575- Court Personnel - Protection of Personal Information (Judge Andrew F. Wilkinson Judicial Security Act)

**FROM:** Maryland Office of the Public Defender

**POSITION:** Favorable with Amendment

**DATE:** 01/30/24

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender (MOPD) urges a favorable report for Senate Bill 575, with an amendment to include attorneys from the Maryland Office of the Public Defender as “Protected Individual[s].”

Senate Bill 575 will protect the information of, and increase security for, current and retired judges, justices, magistrates, and commissioners. The need for this law has unfortunately become apparent, as recent violent attacks and threats affect judges around the country and in Maryland. This would follow recently-enacted federal legislation that protects members of the Federal Judiciary who perform the important function of interpreting the Constitution of the United States and administering justice in a fair and impartial manner. The bill is also important for future recruitment and retention of judges in Maryland, so they can safely seek judgeships and fulfill their obligations without fear of retribution.

Public Defenders tasked with upholding the Constitutional rights of their clients, unfortunately face similar threats and attacks on their persons and their privacy. Throughout Maryland, Public Defenders have been threatened with “doxing,” invasions of privacy, and physical harm. No public servant should fear their safety based solely on the job they carry out. Thus, we urge the Committee to add attorneys for the Maryland Office of the Public Defender to the list of “Protected Individual[s]” and issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 575.

**Submitted by: Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Government Relations Division.**

**SB0575 - MSBA Support FWA Letter (2024.01.30).pdf**

Uploaded by: Shaoli Katana

Position: FWA



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520 West Fayette Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
410-685-7878 | msba.org

**Annapolis Office**  
200 Duke of Gloucester Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
410-269-6464 | msba.org

To: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
From: Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA)  
Subject: SB 575 – Court Personnel - Protection of Personal Information (Judge Andrew F. Wilkinson Judicial Security Act)  
Date: January 30, 2024  
Position: **Favorable with Amendment**

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The Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) supports **Senate Bill 575 - Court Personnel - Protection of Personal Information (Judge Andrew F. Wilkinson Judicial Security Act)**. SB 575 authorizes a certain protected individual or the Office of Information Privacy in the Administrative Office of the Courts to request that a governmental entity or person not publish personal information of the individual on the Internet, social media, or social networks or remove the information from any existing publication; specifies certain procedures for the protection of personal information of a protected individual; authorizes certain relief for a violation of the Act.

MSBA represents more attorneys and judges than any other organization across the state in all practice areas. Through its advocacy committees and various practice-specific sections, MSBA monitors and takes positions on legislation that protects the legal profession, preserves the integrity of the judicial system, and ensures access to justice for Marylanders.

Enhancing judicial security and preserving the rule of law is critical to MSBA and the entire legal profession. Most recently, MSBA mourns the killing of Judge Andrew F. Wilkinson, Circuit Court Judge for Washington County and longtime MSBA member. Judge Wilkinson's murder follows escalating threats and violence faced by Maryland state and federal judges, attorneys, and courthouse personnel on a routine basis.

The judiciary serves a vital function of upholding the rule of law and serving as a pillar of our democracy and freedom. We must preserve judicial integrity and independence, allowing judges to make impartial decisions without fear of violent threats and harmful physical recourse. Attacks on the judiciary can also have a chilling effect on the recruitment and retention of judges, as attorneys must weigh their calling to the highest level of professional service with their personal safety. We must offer specific protections to our judges to preserve the justice system they represent.

The remedies outlined in SB 575 are carefully drawn to protect the judiciary while balancing the public's right to information and legitimate business needs. The bill would protect the safety of judges and their families through a practical, straightforward approach to enhance judicial safety. The bill is not overly

burdensome, as it limits “personal information” to categories included in recently-enacted federal legislation and similar bills in other states to protect this population. The bill provides a reasonable process and response time to request and remove the information of “protected individuals” and offers appropriate relief, damages, and criminal penalties for violations of the Act. The Office of Information Privacy within the Administrative Office of the Courts, with the authority to shield judicial addresses and to request and respond to personal information requests, will be instrumental in appropriately supporting the needs of the judiciary in implementing this bill.

Judicial security cannot be resolved through the passage of one bill alone. Broad-based efforts to assess both immediate and long-term security needs, including courthouse construction and modernization projects and security recruitment and training programs, must be pursued through the proposed task force. MSBA strongly endorses the establishment of the Task Force to Ensure the Safety of Judicial Facilities and respectfully suggests that “*a representative of the Maryland State Bar Association, designated by the President of the Association,*” be appointed and included. With membership of thousands of practitioners and judges from across the state, MSBA can provide valuable expertise and firsthand accounts of security deficiencies and needs of courthouses in various Maryland jurisdictions.

Every judicial officer in the state must be able to decide cases without fear for their safety or for their family.

For these reasons, MSBA strongly supports SB 575 and urges a **favorable report with the proposed amendment**.

Contact: Shaoli Katana, Advocacy Director ([shaoli@msba.org](mailto:shaoli@msba.org), 410-387-5606)