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To: Members of the House Judiciary Committee  
From: Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA)  
Subject: HB 44 – Election Law – Circuit Court Judges – Nonpartisan Elections  
Date: February 10, 2025  
Position: **Support**

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The Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) respectfully **opposes** HB 44 - Election Law – Circuit Court Judges – Nonpartisan Elections. House Bill 44 requires circuit court judges to be elected on a nonpartisan basis; prohibits a candidate for circuit court judge from being nominated by a political party or by petition; and requires candidates to be nominated at the primary election in each year that one or more circuit court judges are to be elected.

MSBA represents more attorneys 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.

While HB 44 seeks to amend the current system of judicial elections for circuit court judges, MSBA opposes the bill. Contested judicial elections for circuit court judges threaten the independence and integrity of the circuit court, and HB 44 fails to significantly improve the process. MSBA has opposed contested judicial elections for over thirty years on ethical, political, campaign, and monetary grounds, as well as concerns about judicial independence.

For these reasons, MSBA respectfully urges a **unfavorable report on House Bill 44**.

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