

HON. STACY A. MAYER
CIRCUIT COURT
JUDGE
BALTIMORE COUNTY
CHAIR

HON. RICHARD SANDY
CIRCUIT COURT
JUDGE
FREDERICK COUNTY
VICE-CHAIR



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MARYLAND JUDICIAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Legislative Committee
Suzanne D. Pelz, Esq.
410-260-1523
RE: Senate Bill 475
Criminal Procedure – Evidence – Protecting Artists’ Creative
Expression (PACE Act)
DATE: February 4, 2026
(2/11)
POSITION: Oppose

The Maryland Judiciary opposes Senate Bill 475. This bill would provide that in any criminal proceeding or juvenile proceeding, the “creative expression” of a defendant or respondent is not admissible against the defendant/respondent unless the court finds, by clear and convincing evidence, certain things.

The Judiciary recognizes the bill’s attempt to respond legislatively to the Supreme Court of Maryland’s decision in *Montague v. State*, 471 Md. 657 (2019), and takes no position on the stated intent to protect the admissibility of creative expression. That policy prerogative is appropriately reserved for the legislature. The Judiciary would note that the bill appears to cover all expression that is not literal, which could include common use of analogies and metaphors, and preclude all manner of statement from admission – more than songs, poems, and artistic expression. A litigant may raise the issue of admissibility of any analogy or metaphor thereby requiring an additional evidentiary hearing, which would delay trials on their merits.

cc. Hon. Charles Sydnor, III
Judicial Council

Legislative Committee
Kelley O'Connor