

Department of Fiscal Services  
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 580 (Senator Ferguson)  
Judicial Proceedings

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Civil Actions - Punitive Damages

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This bill defines punitive damages and specifies the circumstances in which they may be awarded. In addition, the bill provides that a court must give instructions to a jury regarding the purpose of punitive damages and other factors to consider in making such an award. Finally, the bill provides that either trial or appellate courts must review awards of punitive damages to assure that the awards are supported by clear and convincing evidence in the record and are consistent with the principles and factors applicable under Maryland law.

The bill applies prospectively.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None. The bill would not directly affect governmental finances.

**Local Effect:** None.

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**Information Source(s):** Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Fiscal Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 19, 1996

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