

**Department of Fiscal Services**  
Maryland General Assembly

**FISCAL NOTE**

House Bill 532 (Delegate Rosenberg, et al.)  
Judiciary

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**Qualified Immunity from Civil Liability - SLAPP Suits**

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This bill establishes that a lawsuit is a “strategic lawsuit against public participation” (SLAPP suit) if it is (1) brought in bad faith against a party who has exercised specified federal or State constitutional rights of free speech in communicating with a government body or public at large; (2) materially related to the defendant’s communication; and (3) intended to inhibit the exercise of those constitutional rights. The bill provides immunity from civil liability to a defendant in a SLAPP suit who acts in good faith in exercising the same constitutional rights. A defendant is allowed to file a motion to dismiss a SLAPP suit or to stay all court proceedings.

The bill is applied prospectively only.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. Any effect on the judiciary’s caseload is expected to be negligible.

**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 13, 1996  
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