

**Department of Fiscal Services**  
Maryland General Assembly

**FISCAL NOTE**

House Bill 408 (Delegates Opara and Vallario)  
Judiciary

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**Jury Trials - Civil Proceedings**

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This bill proposes to amend Article 23 of the Maryland Declaration of Rights whereby the right to a jury trial in civil proceedings is preserved when the amount in controversy exceeds \$5,000. The constitutional amendment would increase that threshold to \$10,000. A bill to provide for this change in statute has been introduced as HB 407.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Minimal, as discussed below.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None. While the enactment of this Constitutional Amendment would bar some civil actions from jury trials, it is assumed that the outcome of any action sought by or against a small business would not be substantially affected.

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**Fiscal Analysis**

**State Expenditures:** The Maryland Constitution requires that proposed amendments to the Constitution be publicized in at least two newspapers in each county, if available, and in at least three newspapers in Baltimore City once a week for four weeks immediately preceding a general election. The costs associated with these requirements are borne by the State. It is anticipated that the budget of the State Board of Elections for fiscal 1999 will contain funding for publishing constitutional amendments for the 1998 general election.

**Local Expenditures:** If approved by the General Assembly, this constitutional amendment will be submitted to the voters at the 1998 general election. It should not require additional costs for the county election boards to administer the election.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 12, 1997

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