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By: **Delegates Vallario, Anderson, Dumais, Gutierrez, Kelley, McComas,  
Petzold, Rosenberg, Simmons, Smigiel, and Sophocleus**

Introduced and read first time: January 27, 2006

Assigned to: Judiciary

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A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Civil Jury Trials - Amount in Controversy**

3 FOR the purpose of authorizing enactment of certain legislation to limit the right of  
4 trial by jury in civil proceedings to those proceedings in which the amount in  
5 controversy exceeds a certain amount; and submitting this amendment to the  
6 qualified voters of the State of Maryland for their adoption or rejection.

7 BY proposing an amendment to the Maryland Constitution  
8 Declaration of Rights  
9 Article 5(a)

10 BY proposing the repeal and reenactment, without amendment,  
11 Declaration of Rights  
12 Article 23

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
14 MARYLAND, (Three-fifths of all the members elected to each of the two Houses  
15 concurring), That it be proposed that the Maryland Constitution read as follows:

16 **Declaration of Rights**

17 Article 5.

18 (a) (1) That the Inhabitants of Maryland are entitled to the Common Law of  
19 England, and the trial by Jury, according to the course of that Law, and to the benefit  
20 of such of the English statutes as existed on the Fourth day of July, seventeen  
21 hundred and seventy-six; and which, by experience, have been found applicable to  
22 their local and other circumstances, and have been introduced, used and practiced by  
23 the Courts of Law or Equity; and also of all Acts of Assembly in force on the first day  
24 of June, eighteen hundred and sixty-seven; except such as may have since expired, or  
25 may be inconsistent with the provisions of this Constitution; subject, nevertheless, to  
26 the revision of, and amendment or repeal by, the Legislature of this State. And the  
27 Inhabitants of Maryland are also entitled to all property derived to them from, or

1 under the Charter granted by His Majesty Charles the First to Caecilius Calvert,  
2 Baron of Baltimore.

3 (2) SUBJECT TO ARTICLE 23 OF THE DECLARATION OF RIGHTS,  
4 LEGISLATION MAY BE ENACTED THAT LIMITS THE RIGHT TO TRIAL BY JURY IN CIVIL  
5 PROCEEDINGS TO THOSE PROCEEDINGS IN WHICH THE AMOUNT IN CONTROVERSY  
6 EXCEEDS A SPECIFIED AMOUNT.

7 Article 23.

8 In the trial of all criminal cases, the Jury shall be the Judges of Law, as well as  
9 of fact, except that the Court may pass upon the sufficiency of the evidence to sustain  
10 a conviction.

11 The right of trial by Jury of all issues of fact in civil proceedings in the several  
12 Courts of Law in this State, where the amount in controversy exceeds the sum of  
13 \$10,000, shall be inviolably preserved.

14 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the General Assembly  
15 determines that the amendment to the Maryland Constitution proposed by this Act  
16 affects multiple jurisdictions and that the provisions of Article XIV, § 1 of the  
17 Maryland Constitution concerning local approval of constitutional amendments do  
18 not apply.

19 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the foregoing section  
20 proposed as an amendment to the Maryland Constitution shall be submitted to the  
21 legal and qualified voters of this State at the next general election to be held in  
22 November, 2006 for their adoption or rejection in pursuance of directions contained in  
23 Article XIV of the Maryland Constitution. At that general election, the vote on this  
24 proposed amendment to the Constitution shall be by ballot, and upon each ballot  
25 there shall be printed the words "For the Constitutional Amendment" and "Against  
26 the Constitutional Amendment," as now provided by law. Immediately after the  
27 election, all returns shall be made to the Governor of the vote for and against the  
28 proposed amendment, as directed by Article XIV of the Maryland Constitution, and  
29 further proceedings had in accordance with Article XIV.