

## Chapter 233

(Senate Bill 135)

AN ACT concerning

### **Criminal Procedure – Petition for Writ of Actual Innocence – Notice of Filing and Hearing**

FOR the purpose of limiting to a person charged by indictment or criminal information with a crime triable in circuit court and convicted of that crime the authority to file a petition for writ of actual innocence under certain circumstances; requiring a certain person who files a petition for writ of actual innocence to notify the State of the filing in a certain manner; authorizing the State to file a response to a petition for writ of actual innocence within a certain period of time; requiring that the victim or victim's representative be notified of a hearing on a petition for writ of actual innocence before the hearing is held; establishing that a victim or victim's representative has the right to attend a hearing on a petition for writ of actual innocence; repealing a provision of law authorizing the court to dismiss a certain petition without a hearing if the court finds that the petition fails to state a claim; making this Act an emergency measure; and generally relating to a petition for writ of actual innocence.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
Article – Criminal Procedure  
Section 8–301  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2008 Replacement Volume and 2009 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

#### **Article – Criminal Procedure**

8–301.

(a) A ~~convicted~~ person **CHARGED BY INDICTMENT OR CRIMINAL INFORMATION WITH A CRIME TRIABLE IN CIRCUIT COURT AND CONVICTED OF THAT CRIME MAY**, at any time, ~~may~~ file a petition for writ of actual innocence in the circuit court for the county in which the conviction was imposed if the person claims that there is newly discovered evidence that:

(1) creates a substantial or significant possibility that the result may have been different, as that standard has been judicially determined; and

(2) could not have been discovered in time to move for a new trial under Maryland Rule 4-331.

(b) A petition filed under this section shall:

- (1) be in writing;
- (2) state in detail the grounds on which the petition is based;
- (3) describe the newly discovered evidence;
- (4) contain or be accompanied by a request for hearing if a hearing is sought; and
- (5) distinguish the newly discovered evidence claimed in the petition from any claims made in prior petitions.

**(C) (1) A PETITIONER SHALL NOTIFY THE STATE IN WRITING OF THE FILING OF A PETITION UNDER THIS SECTION.**

**(2) THE STATE MAY FILE A RESPONSE TO THE PETITION WITHIN ~~15~~ 90 DAYS AFTER RECEIPT OF THE NOTICE REQUIRED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION OR WITHIN THE PERIOD OF TIME THAT THE COURT ORDERS.**

**(D) (1) BEFORE A HEARING IS HELD ON A PETITION FILED UNDER THIS SECTION, THE VICTIM OR VICTIM'S REPRESENTATIVE SHALL BE NOTIFIED OF THE HEARING AS PROVIDED UNDER § 11-104 OR § 11-503 OF THIS ARTICLE.**

**(2) A VICTIM OR VICTIM'S REPRESENTATIVE HAS THE RIGHT TO ATTEND A HEARING ON A PETITION FILED UNDER THIS SECTION AS PROVIDED UNDER § 11-102 OF THIS ARTICLE.**

**[(c)] (E) (1)** Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, the court shall hold a hearing on a petition filed under this section if the petition satisfies the requirements of subsection (b) of this section and a hearing was requested.

(2) The court may dismiss a petition without a hearing if the court finds that the petition fails to ~~state a claim or~~ assert grounds on which relief may be granted.

**[(d)] (F) (1)** In ruling on a petition filed under this section, the court may set aside the verdict, resentence, grant a new trial, or correct the sentence, as the court considers appropriate.

(2) The court shall state the reasons for its ruling on the record.

**[(e)] (G)** A petitioner in a proceeding under this section has the burden of proof.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act is an emergency measure, is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health or safety, has been passed by a yea and nay vote supported by three-fifths of all the members elected to each of the two Houses of the General Assembly, and shall take effect from the date it is enacted.

**Approved by the Governor, May 4, 2010.**