

MARYLAND JUDICIAL CONFERENCE
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Hon. Mary Ellen Barbera
Chief Judge

187 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis, MD 21401

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Legislative Committee
Suzanne D. Pelz, Esq.
410-260-1523
RE: Senate Bill 273
Crimes – Firearms – Penalties and Procedures (Violent Firearms
Offender Act of 2020)
DATE: January 29, 2020
(2/6)
POSITION: Oppose

The Maryland Judiciary opposes Senate Bill 273. Senate Bill 273 establishes and alters various penalties and conditions of sentencing regarding certain firearm-related violations.

This bill contains numerous mandatory sentencing provisions – including mandatory minimum sentences, mandatory consecutive sentences, prohibitions on suspension of sentences, and limitations on parole eligibility. The Judiciary traditionally opposes legislation that includes mandatory provisions. The Judiciary believes it is important for judges to weigh the facts and circumstances for each individual case when imposing a sentence. Provisions that place restrictions on the sentencing judge prevent the judge from considering legislative intent or factors unique to the case. Recognizing that lawmakers are responsible for enacting penalties for crimes, judges are mindful of various mitigating factors in crafting a sentence that most appropriately fits the individual defendant and the crime.

cc. Hon. Bill Ferguson
Judicial Council
Legislative Committee
Kelley O'Connor