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Environment and
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Subcommittees
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Good afternoon Judiciary Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members

For the record, I am Delegate Regina T. Boyce here to provide testimony on HB704 Attorney Grievance Commission - Disciplinary Fund - Annual Fee.

HB704 lowers the annual disciplinary fund annual fee for public sector lawyers from \$130 to \$50. The annual fund was created in 1965 by the Bar of Maryland for the purpose of protecting the name and integrity of the legal profession. The annual fund is funded by fees paid by active practicing attorneys and is used for reimbursing claimants who experience loss due to theft and fraud by practicing members of the Maryland Bar. The fees for all active lawyers is \$130 a year: \$110 for the assessment and \$20 for the client protection fund fee. If the fee is 60 days late, a \$25 late fee is assessed. If the fee is 120 days late, a \$50 late fee is assessed. In FY19, 42,000 lawyers paid into the fund. A breakdown of the math equates to \$5,460,000 a year for which \$840,000 from the total amount goes toward the client protection fund. In FY19 the annual fund collected \$276,355 in late fees bringing the totals amount of FY19 fund to about \$5,736,355.

Public sector lawyers: public defenders, prosecutors, attorneys general, or city lawyers do not manage clients' money, or take client fees. These public sector lawyers are paid a salary for their public service work by their public sector employers.

Currently, those exempted from paying the annual fee are inactive or retired lawyers as well as judges and administrative law clerks.

This bill, which is constituent led, brings a financial and a logical balance to a worthy system of protecting a profession as well as those who rely on the integrity of the profession.

Thank you for the opportunity, and a favorable report.

Regina T. Boyce, Delegate

Delegate Regina T. Boyce