



**HB508 COVID-19 Claim – Civil Immunity**  
**Judiciary Community**  
**February 3, 2021**

**Position:** Favorable

**Background:** HB508 provides immunity to certain businesses against claims for damages caused by exposure to COVID-19.

**Comments:** The Maryland Retailers Association (MRA) supports HB508, which provides protections for diligent businesses against frivolous claims for COVID-19-related damages. Businesses across the state, particularly essential businesses that have remained open through months of restrictions in order to serve their communities, have been doing everything they can to protect their customers and their employees against the COVID-19 novel coronavirus.

MRA believes that businesses that have followed the letter of the law and complied with all operating directives during the State of Emergency should not be responsible for exposures that may have occurred despite all efforts to operate safely. Efforts to protect the public, including requiring additional cleaning and sanitation, setting up floor markers and one-way aisles, door counting to restrict occupancy, and providing PPE for employees, have driven up operating costs for businesses that are already suffering due to social restrictions. While bad apples should always be held accountable for their actions, businesses that have followed all requirements and gone above and beyond to operate as safely as possible should not have to fear civil claims for exposures that may have occurred outside of their control.

Thank you for your consideration, and we urge a favorable report on HB508.