



January 29, 2021

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Members of the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing  
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Re.: **SB 335 – Favorable Position  
Courts—Nongovernmental Corporate Parties – Disclosure Statements**

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

**The undersigned organizations join together to encourage you to vote favorably on SB 335.** This legislation will have no fiscal impact on the State but will make sure litigants utilizing Maryland courts are transparent about the identity of the parties in interest appearing in the civil litigation.

The Federal Courts and multiple other jurisdictions already require disclosure of such information so this legislation would make Maryland consistent with what is already required in other jurisdictions. *See e.g.* Fed. R. Civ. P. 7.1; Rule 26.1 of the Rules of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals; Rule 1:21 of Massachusetts Rules of Court and Standing Orders; Rule 13.1 of the Guam Rules of Appellate procedure; Rule 18 of the Virgin Island Rules of Appellate Procedure.

We believe Maryland should follow the traditions of other jurisdictions to ensure that those corporate parties utilizing Maryland courts disclose the financial interests of the persons involved. Such disclosure will ensure transparency in Maryland court proceedings and facilitate judges adjudicating claims before them in determining whether recusal is appropriate due to conflict of interest or even an appearance of conflict of interest. Such matters are also of public concern and it is important and necessary for the public to have confidence that its judicial system and its proceedings are carried out in a fair and impartial manner.

Based on the foregoing, we encourage the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee **to vote favorably on SB 335**. If you have any questions, please contact Alexa Bertinelli at 410-706-5650 or [abertinelli@civiljusticenetwork.org](mailto:abertinelli@civiljusticenetwork.org).

Sincerely,

Alexa Bertinelli  
Senior Staff Attorney  
Civil Justice

Debra Gardner  
Legal Director  
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Shana Roth-Gormley  
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Community Law Center

Marceline White  
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