



Maryland Municipal League

The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

TESTIMONY

February 3, 2021

Committee: House Judiciary

Bill: HB 508 – COVID-19 Claim - Civil Immunity

Position: Oppose

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League opposes HB 508. This bill allows an individual to bring a claim for damages if they or someone in their household was exposed to COVID-19. This bill also indemnifies persons, including local governments, who abided by all federal, state, and local rules unless they were grossly negligent.

While we appreciate that local governments are protected unless grossly negligent, our members will still have to defend against these suits. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a scary, stressful, and emotionally charged time for our everyone, but its individual impact varies greatly depending on location, race, age, gender, financial resources, and pre-existing health concerns. As a result, a government restriction designed to limit the spread could seem reasonable to one person, overly burdensome to another, and grossly negligent to a third. This could result in a number of lawsuits filed with a variety of viability, requiring local governments to spend significant time and resources on their defense.

COVID-19 is a serious disease and bad actors should be held responsible. Appropriate causes of action are already available to potential plaintiffs. This measure would expose local governments to a new type of lawsuit and additional expense. For these reasons, the Maryland Municipal League opposes HB 508 and respectfully requests an unfavorable committee report.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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