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March 29, 2021

The Honorable Luke H. Clippinger
Chair, Judiciary Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
House Office Building, Room 101
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Re.: **Opposition to SB 670**
Courts- Civil Jury Trials – Amounts in Controversy

Dear Chairman Clippinger & Members of the House Judicial Committee:

On behalf of my statewide clients and your constituents, **I provide this written testimony to oppose SB 670** which is intended for the purpose of closing the doors for some Maryland residents to accessing a jury trial of their peers in civil proceedings.

Current law permits a party to pursue a jury trial in certain civil proceedings. This legislation will narrow the rights of Maryland residents. The right to have your dispute heard before a jury of your peers is fundamental to a democracy. By limiting the rights of residents to have a jury hear their disputes and force those cases to be decided by a judge, the General Assembly in this legislation will simply further erode the public's confidence in a fair and transparent judicial system.

Simply put, who favors a system which closes the doors to a jury trial in civil proceedings? Largely the answer involves corporations who use the courts for their business practices by flooding them with cases against your constituents. The corporations believe they can get quicker justice for their interests and make it more difficult for your constituents to oppose their unfair and deceptive practices by taking away the right to a jury trial. Why would you support an effort against the fundamental right to a jury trial?

PLEASE VOTE UNFAVORABLE ON SB 670 TO PROTECT YOUR CONSTITUENTS' RIGHTS TO ACCESS FAIR AND IMPARTIAL CIVIL PROCEEDINGS IN MARYLAND COURTS.

Respectfully,
/s/ Phillip Robinson
Phillip Robinson