

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA)
Shaoli Katana, Esq., Director

Subject: Senate Bill 279 - Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund - Alteration

Date: February 7, 2022

Position: Support

The Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) joins its partner, the Maryland Access to Justice Commission, and supports **Senate Bill 279 - Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund - Alteration**. Senate Bill 279 alters the Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund to include money received by the Division of Consumer Protection in the Office of the Attorney General from a settlement, an agreement, or a judgment relating to an investigation or enforcement of the Maryland Consumer Protection Act for an unfair, abusive, or deceptive trade practice for rental residential property, excluding money received by the aggrieved party and the costs of the action the Attorney General is entitled to recover.

MSBA represents more attorneys than any other organization across the State in all practice areas. MSBA serves as the voice of Maryland's legal profession. Through its Laws Committee and various practice-specific sections, MSBA monitors and takes positions on legislation of importance to the legal profession.

MSBA supports access to justice for Marylanders and funding of the justice system. MSBA and its partner the Access to Justice Commission recently supported and secured the passage of the legal right to counsel in eviction matters, to help many Maryland renters negatively impacted by the pandemic. SB 279 takes the next step to implement the program through much-needed funding for the Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund.

For the reasons stated above, MSBA **supports** SB 279 and respectfully requests a **favorable report**. For additional information, please feel free to contact Shaoli Katana at MSBA at shaoli@msba.org.