



Maryland | Delaware | DC Press Association

P.O. Box 26214 | Baltimore, MD 21210

443-768-3281 | rsnyder@mddcpres.com

www.mddcpres.com

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Rebecca Snyder, Executive Director, MDDC Press Association

Date: March 2, 2022

Re: **SB758- SUPPORT**

The Maryland-Delaware-District of Columbia Press Association represents a diverse membership of news media organizations, from large metro dailies like the Washington Post and the Baltimore Sun, to hometown newspapers such as The Annapolis Capital and the Frederick News Post to publications such as The Daily Record, the Baltimore Times, and online-only publications such as MarylandReporter.com and Baltimore Brew.

The Press Association is pleased to support SB758, which would allow livestreaming of all criminal proceedings with the exception of a juror or an alleged victim of a sexual offense.

During the past two years, the public has become increasingly familiar with virtual participation in various proceedings. Courts held sessions virtually and have become more adept at this. This bill simply continues in that vein by allowing live broadcast of criminal court proceedings. This is not a new concept. In a 2016 report by the Federal Judicial Center, "Video Recording Courtroom Proceedings in United States District Courts: Report on a Pilot Project", ([http://www.fjc.gov/public/pdf.nsf/lookup/Cameras-in-Courts-Project-Report-2016.pdf/\\$file/Cameras-in-Courts-Project-Report-2016.pdf](http://www.fjc.gov/public/pdf.nsf/lookup/Cameras-in-Courts-Project-Report-2016.pdf/$file/Cameras-in-Courts-Project-Report-2016.pdf)) researchers surveyed bench, bar and staff to understand the effects of a pilot program for video recording. News media were allowed to record and broadcast court proceedings in several of the pilot sites. Survey respondents said that news media did not pose disruptions to proceedings (p Appendix F-14, F-15).

Live streaming criminal court proceedings will provide more transparency and openness to the process and allow the public to better understand and access the court system. It will also allow for court watchers and others to more easily understand the broad trends within the criminal justice system. This legislation is important to our members, as they would be able to cover proceedings more easily and thoroughly without the burdens of proximity.

The Press Association urges a favorable report.



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central to a strong and open society.**

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