



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter  
In Favor of SB775  
- Courts - Payment for Jury Service -  
Before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
On March 2, 2022**

**Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee:**

**Senate Bill 775 modestly raises the daily compensation that individuals receive for the first five (5) days of jury duty from \$15.00 to \$30.00.**

**Currently, employers are not required to compensate employees for jury duty, which means that individuals who earn a daily wage are at greater risk of losing much-needed income. Unfortunately, many wage earners are not in a financial position to lose a whole day's wage - let alone five or more. For example, a full-time employee that is paid the state's minimum wage, which is \$12.50 per hour, loses \$85.00 per day for every day served on a jury. Over a five-day period, that adds up to a loss of \$425.00, which is a significant amount of money for anyone.**

**Currently, our closest neighbors, Virginia and the District of Columbia, pay their jurors more than Maryland. Virginia pays its jurors \$30 per day while the District of Columbia pays many of its jurors \$40 per day. This bill simply places Maryland on par with our neighbors in the region.**

**Some may believe that increasing what jurors are paid is unnecessary, particularly since serving on a jury is a civic duty and jurors earn \$50.00 per day after five days of service. However, this line**

**of thinking harms the purpose of our jury system, particularly the role that jurors play, which is to listen to evidence during trial, decide what facts the evidence has established, and draw inferences from those facts to form the basis for their decision. I think it goes without saying that a person who is worried about the adverse financial effects of sitting on a jury is less likely to focus on carrying out their duties than those who are unburdened financially. The result is a less effective jury service and less reliable outcomes for plaintiffs and defendants.**

**However, higher pay would lead to fewer jurors seeking excuses from service and aid in the empaneling of more representative juries. While it is understood that juror compensation was never meant to serve as a substitute for a salary, raising the daily rate of juror compensation to \$30.00 per day would provide some small relief for the sacrifices made by jurors.**

**Overall, Senate Bill 775 aims to alleviate financial burdens placed on individuals by modestly increasing the compensation they receive for performing their civic duty of jury service.**

**This bill has received the endorsement of activists across the state including the Prince George's County Court Watch, Baltimore City Court Watch, Common Cause Maryland, the League of Women Voters, and the Maryland Justice Project.**

**As such, I urge this committee to give a favorable report on Senate Bill 775. Thank you**

**Respectfully,**



**Jill P. Carter**