

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the House Judiciary Committee

From: Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA)
Shaoli Katana, Esq., Director of Advocacy Initiatives and Member Engagement

Subject: House Bill 1430 - Courts – Special Court Dockets – Weapons Crimes

Date: March 14, 2022

Position: Oppose

The Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) respectfully opposes **House Bill 1430 - Courts – Special Court Dockets – Weapons Crimes**. **House Bill 1430** requires the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals to establish a special court docket in each of the circuit courts to exclusively hear and decide cases alleging a violation of certain provisions of law relating to weapons and to assign necessary personnel; and requires a court assigned a case under the Act to follow the rules of practice and procedure applicable to that court.

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.

The proposed legislation infringes on judicial independence by requiring the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals to establish a special court docket to hear cases involving certain weapons crimes, without regard to existing court procedures and process for handling these matters. The Judiciary is in the best position to create and implement such policies, rather than the legislature. The Judiciary works with local jurisdictions around the state to improve the efficiency of case processing and dockets.

MSBA has concerns with the details of this legislation and respectfully requests an **unfavorable report**. For additional information, please feel free to contact Shaoli Katana at MSBA at shaoli@msba.org.