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January 19, 2022

To: The Honorable Luke Clippinger  
Chair, Judiciary Committee

From: Hannibal G. Williams II Kemerer  
Chief Counsel, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

Re: HB0074– Courts – Jury Service Disqualification – **Letter of Support**

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The Office of the Attorney General urges the Judiciary Committee to favorably report House Bill 74. Delegate Fisher's bill would relax the rules that have traditionally prohibited ex-offenders from serving on a jury. The law currently disqualifies anyone who has been convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment exceeding 1 year and received a sentence of imprisonment for more than 1 year. The only exception to jury service disqualification under current law is if the person is pardoned.

This bill would keep the requirement that the person have been convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment exceeding 1 year, but limit it to those who are "currently serving the sentence imposed for the conviction, including a term of probation." Once the ex-offender has served his or her sentence and probation, he or she would be free to serve on a jury despite the prior conviction. The bill advances sound policy, consistent with positions that our Office has taken on measures like the "ban the box" movement and bail reform—things that seek to facilitate someone's transition back to being contributing members of their community.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General urges the Committee to favorably report House Bill 74.

cc: Committee Members