






**BALTIMORE
COURTWATCH**

SHINING A LIGHT IN THE DARK CORNERS
OF BALTIMORE CITY'S COURTS.

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SB 0043 (Courts – Court Remote Access) FAVORABLE

TO: William C. Smith, Jr., *Chair*
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Baltimore Courtwatch (BCW) is a transparency organization that observes public court hearings and educates the public on how our judicial system impacts our fellow Baltimoreans. Since April 2020, we have observed and reported on over 5,600 bail review hearings in the Baltimore City Circuit Court using the publicly available phone number found on the [Circuit Court of Baltimore City's website](#).

Our work relies heavily on remote access to hearings. The passage of SB0043 is an essential step to ensure that broad public accessibility to proceedings remains intact so that the public can continue to be given happenings within the courts. Additionally, with the remote access intact, we have been able to compile a comprehensive dataset spanning 2.5 years, a first-of-its-kind in the United States. Academics and national organizations use this dataset for analysis of judicial processes.

Without this remote access, Baltimore Courtwatch would not have been able to observe 14 hearings in which an Assistant State's Attorney did not show up for a bail hearing at all. We also would not have been able to refute then-State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby when she denied these absences while testifying to Baltimore City Council.

We ask that the Judiciary Committee give SB0043 a favorable report.

Thank you,

Chris Comeau and Angela Burneko
Founders, Baltimore Courtwatch

For more information about Baltimore Courtwatch or our position, please contact Co-Founder Christopher Comeau at chris@baltimorecourtwatch.org



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