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TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, Judiciary Committee

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

RE: HB0154 Workgroup to Study the Impact of Court-Mandated Fines and Fees
(Support)

If enacted, Delegate Melissa Wells' House Bill 154 would create a workgroup to study the impact of court-mandated fines and fees. The workgroup would consist of two members of the State Senate, two members of the House of Delegates, the Public Defender (or her designee), the Attorney General (or his designee), and the following members appointed by the Governor: (i) one representative of the Administrative Office of the Courts ("AOC"); (ii) one representative of the Job Opportunities Task Force; (iii) one representative of the National Fines and Fees Justice Center; (iv) one representative of the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition;¹ and (v) one representative of the Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service.

The resulting workgroup is tasked with studying the impact of court-mandated fines and fees on low-income residents and the revenue structure that relies on court-mandated fines and fees; and to develop a plan and legislative recommendations for eliminating or reducing court-mandated fines and fees. Significantly, the AOC is tasked with providing staff for the workgroup. This makes sense because the workgroup's charge is to study *court* fines and fees. If passed, the legislation would require the workgroup to report its plan and legislative recommendations to the General Assembly on or before December 31, 2023. House Bill 154, and the resulting workgroup, sunset on June 30, 2024, "with nor further action required by the General Assembly"

Contingent upon the AOC remaining charged with staffing the workgroup, we urge a favorable report on HB 154.

cc: Committee Members

¹ The bill should be amended to reflect MCRC's new name, [Economic Action MD](#).