



MSBA Main Office
520 West Fayette Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-685-7878 | msba.org

Annapolis Office
200 Duke of Gloucester Street
Annapolis, MD 21401
410-269-6464 | msba.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the House Judiciary Committee

From: Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA)
Shaoli Katana, Esq., Advocacy Director

Subject: House Bill 536 - Court Officials - Public Disclosure of Personal Information

Date: February 15, 2023

Position: Support

The Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) supports **House Bill 536 - Court Officials - Public Disclosure of Personal Information**. HB 536 authorizes certain judges and prosecutors and certain immediate family members to make a written request that certain personal information be removed from the Internet or from certain other publications; requires a person who receives a request under the Act to remove the information within 72 hours; and prohibits the inspection without permission of public records containing the home address or telephone number of certain current and former judges and prosecutors.

The MSBA represents more attorneys and judges 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 MSBA strongly supports the updated version of the bill provided by the Judiciary. Enhancing judicial security is critical to the MSBA and the entire legal profession. HB 536 would not only protect the safety of judges and their families, but also preserve judicial integrity and independence, allowing judges to make decisions without fear of

harmful recourse. The bill provides a practical, straightforward approach to enhance judicial safety, without being overly burdensome to implement, as the bill limits “personal information” to home addresses and unpublished telephone numbers posted on the Internet by state or local governments or by private parties. The bill provides a reasonable process to permit judges who qualify as “protected individuals” to request the sensitive information be taken down.

HB 536 will improve the safety and security of current and retired judges, as ongoing violent and tragic threats and attacks affect judges around the country. This would follow recently-enacted federal legislation and similar bills in other states to protect this population. The bill is also critically important for future recruitment and retention of judges in Maryland, so they can safely seek judgeships and fulfill their obligations without fear of retribution.

For the reasons stated above, MSBA supports HB 536 and respectfully requests a favorable report. For additional information, please feel free to contact Shaoli Katana at MSBA at shaoli@msba.org.