

The **HOLLAND LAW FIRM**
for Consumer Rights

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February 15, 2024

Chairman William C. Smith, Jr. Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing 11 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21401	Chairman Luke Clippinger House Judiciary Committee House Office Building, Room 101 6 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21401
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Re: Support for SB 827/HB 1079
Courts and Judicial Proceedings – Jury Examination

Dear Chairman Smith and Chairman Clippinger:

As the founder of one of Maryland's only private law firms dedicated to helping consumers harmed by collection abuse and other unfair trade practices, we have seen our share of implicit bias in the courtroom. I have personally experienced the feeling of not knowing enough information about potential jurors that would help with peremptory challenges to ensure an impartial jury.

I urge a favorable report on SB 827/HB 1079 which addresses critical issues surrounding *voir dire* in Maryland. It is concerning that Maryland is currently not in alignment with U.S. Supreme Court precedent on this issue. SB 827/HB 1079 is a crucial step towards improving our legal system, ensuring equal representation, and fostering diversity within our courtrooms. SB 827/HB 1079 offers a necessary clarification of the scope and purpose of *voir dire*, and provides attorneys with essential information to exercise peremptory challenges judiciously without violating constitutional principles.

I urge you to support the passage of SB 827/HB 1079 to ensure equal access to a fair and impartial trial by jury.

Sincerely,

/s/ Peter A. Holland
PETER A. HOLLAND