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February 1, 2024

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Tiffany Johnson Clark
Chief Counsel, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: Senate Bill 379 – Task Force to Study Crime Classification – Renaming,
Membership, and Duties – **Support with Amendment**

The Office of the Attorney General asks the Judicial Proceedings to give **Senate Bill 379 – Task Force to Study Crime Classification – Renaming, Membership, and Duties** sponsored by Senator Chris West a favorable report. Senate Bill 379 renames the Task Force, expands the membership of the task force, and alters the duties of the task force. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2025.

The Task Force to Study Crime Classification was established in 2019 by the Maryland General Assembly to (1) study and make recommendations regarding a method for classifying crimes and civil offenses under State law and (2) identify and logically categorize all crimes and civil offenses that exist under State law by December 2023. The Task Force was assembled in August 2023 and was staffed by the Office of the Attorney General. The Task Force held its first meeting in September 2023 and met six times between September 2023 and December 2023.

As part of the Task Force's required report, the Task Force recommended that funding for adequate staff be provided to the Task Force in order to complete the charge of the Task Force with fidelity. The Task Force identified "adequate staffing" as contractual attorneys, paralegals, and law students to provide staffing for the Task Force as well as perform legal and policy research. Due to the broad charge of the Task Force, the OAG suggests an amendment to this bill that adds uncodified language providing funding for the Task Force to contract with a public research institution to provide staff and conduct research for the Task Force.