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To: Members of the House Appropriations Committee
From: Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA)
Subject: HB 768 – Judges’ Retirement System – Special Death Benefit
Date: February 23, 2024
Position: **Favorable**

The Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) supports **HB 768 – Judges’ Retirement System – Special Death Benefit**, establishing a line-of-duty special death benefit for members of the Judges' Retirement System; providing for health benefits for a surviving child or dependent parent; and providing for the retroactive application of the Act.

MSBA represents more attorneys and judges than any other organization across the state in all practice areas. Through its advocacy committees and various practice-specific sections, MSBA monitors and takes positions on legislation that protects the legal profession, preserves the integrity of the judicial system, and ensures access to justice for Marylanders.

Maryland judges and their families deserve additional resources in the event of death arising out of or in the course of judicial duties, most recently in the murder of Washington County Circuit Court Judge Wilkinson by a resentful litigant just hours after a court ruling. As threats and attacks against the judiciary are on the rise, the remedies outlined in HB 768 would provide peace of mind and security to families of Maryland judicial officers. The bill would bring the Maryland Judiciary in line with other state employees and their families currently covered with special line-of-duty death benefits, including teachers, correctional officers, law enforcement, and state police. Retroactive application in this instance ensures equity for all judicial officers and their immediate family members.

For these reasons, MSBA strongly supports HB 768 and urges a **favorable report**.

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