



Baltimore County Bar Association, Inc.

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Baltimore County Bar Association's Testimony in Favor of HB 1079 Courts and Judicial Proceedings – Jury Examination House Judiciary Committee

The mission of the Baltimore County Bar Association (BCBA) is to serve as a leader in advancing excellence, ethical conduct, professionalism and public responsibility in the legal profession; to improve the efficiency, fairness and accessibility of our system of justice for all citizens; to increase the public's understanding and appreciation of our profession and our legal system; to use our collective resources to improve the well-being of our community and its citizens, especially our youth; and to identify and support the needs of a diverse membership and foster an environment in which members experience a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction in the practice of law.

The members of the BCBA¹ expressly support HB 1079, which addresses critical issues surrounding *voir dire* in Maryland, and urge a favorable report. The BCBA is of the opinion that this legislation aligns Maryland with U.S. Supreme Court precedent and mitigates the risk of bias in jury selection. HB 1079 provides a crucial step toward combating bias and improving our legal system. The expansion of *voir dire* will ensure equal representation and foster diversity within our courtrooms by removing potential jurors who are unable to demonstrate impartially. 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 while maintaining constitutional principles.

For the foregoing reasons, the BCBA urges a favorable report on HB 1079. Should you have questions in this regard, please contact me at (443) 254-7620.

Respectfully,

Lisa Y. Settles

Lisa Y. Settles, President
Baltimore County Bar Association

¹Maryland Judiciary members who serve on the BCBA Executive Council and/or the BCBA Diversity & Inclusion Committee abstained from voting on the issue of this bill in accordance with Maryland Code of Judicial Conduct. The position of the BCBA as reflected in this letter does not reflect the position of any member of the Maryland Judiciary.

