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MHBA
**MARYLAND HISPANIC
BAR ASSOCIATION**

THE MARYLAND HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION

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February 18, 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

Re: **Support for SB 827/HB 1079**
Courts and Judicial Proceedings – Jury Examination

Dear Chairman Smith and Chairman Clippinger:

By way of this letter, the Maryland Hispanic Bar Association (MHBA) members¹ express their support for a favorable determination on SB 827/HB 1079, which addresses critical issues surrounding *voir dire* in Maryland. This legislation aligns Maryland with U.S. Supreme Court precedent and mitigates the risk of bias in jury selection. SB 827/HB 1079 is a crucial step towards 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 impartially exercise their duty. 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.

¹ Maryland Judiciary members who are MHBA Board members abstained from voting on the issue of this bill in accordance with Maryland Code of Judicial Conduct. The position of the MHBA members reflected on this letter is not the position of the judiciary members of the MHBA Board and members of the MHBA who are in the judiciary.

February 18, 2024

Page 2

The MHBA urges you to support the passage of SB 827/HB 1079 to ensure equal access to a fair and impartial trial by jury. Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the MHBA President, Rebeka Bautista at (301) 381-8286.

Sincerely,

Rebeka N. Bautista

Rebeka N. Bautista

President

Maryland Hispanic Bar Association