



POSITION PAPER 2024

info@mdforjustice.com

HB330, SB568 Courts – Civil Actions – SLAPP

FAVORABLE

The Maryland Association for Justice (MAJ) supports HB330 and SB568 which modernize the existing SLAPP statute, Courts §5-807, by modifying Maryland’s law to be consistent with other SLAPP statutes in other jurisdictions.

During the shortened 2020 Legislature, the MAJ worked with Del. Rosenberg and other supporters to modify the then-proposed SLAPP bill to modify and improve it. These bills incorporate those changes. Updating Maryland law is overdue.

SLAPP actions are, as the acronym implies, a strategic lawsuit against public participation. Some litigants file a SLAPP lawsuit intended to suppress a citizen’s expressing free speech and criticism of a public official. SLAPP statutes exist in almost every state to protect people from lawsuits that have a purpose of suppressing free speech against government officials by providing grounds for dismissal, expedited motions to dismiss, and awards of attorney’s fees against the filing party.

See “State Anti-Slapp Laws” for a chart explaining the SLAPP laws in most states (State Anti-SLAPP Law Scorecard), <https://anti-slapp.org/your-states-free-speech-protection/#scorecard>

These bills update Maryland law to better protect free speech rights by discouraging litigants from commencing a lawsuit with the suppressive intent.

The MAJ requests a FAVORABLE Committee Report.