

MARYLAND RETAILERS ALLIANCE

The Voice of Retailing in Maryland



**SB573 Baltimore City - Ordinance Enforcement - Amount of Fines and Penalties
Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 6th, 2025**

Position: Unfavorable

Background: SB573 would increase the maximum amount of fines assessed for code ordinance violations to \$10,000.

Comments: The Maryland Retailers Alliance (MRA) writes to express concerns about **SB573 Baltimore City - Ordinance Enforcement - Amount of Fines and Penalties**, which would increase the maximum amount for fines levied for civil and criminal violations of City ordinances from \$1,000 to \$10,000. We understand that this may be an effort to both address high crime rates and increase revenue for the City; however, the City of Baltimore is already an expensive jurisdiction to both live and conduct business in. Between high utility costs, taxes, insurance and security rates, many business owners must carefully weigh the desire to operate within the City against the cost of locating there. Additionally, the average business does not operate with the intent of breaking the law. Incurring a \$1,000 fine for an accidental code violation without an opportunity for corrective action is already costly for small businesses that are struggling to break even; increasing that potential fine by 900% would have a major impact on entities that find themselves in violation of an ordinance due to ignorance, an accident, or honest mistake. We would caution the Committee and City against taking such drastic measures as an opportunity to increase revenue or as a primary tactic to address overall crime rates.

Thank you for your consideration.