



2025 POSITION PAPER SB 167

SB167 Courts-Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation FAVORABLE

MAJ Position In Support of SB 167, Courts – Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation.

The Maryland Associations for Justice (MAJ) supports SB167 which modernizes the existing SLAPP statute, Md. Ann. Code, Courts §5-807, by modifying Maryland’s law to be consistent with other SLAPP statutes in other jurisdictions.

Starting in the 2020 General Assembly, the MAJ worked with bill sponsors and other supporters to modify the then-proposed SLAPP bill to improve it. SB167 incorporates those changes.

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. SLAPP statutes exist in 34 states to protect people from lawsuits that have a purpose of suppressing free speech by providing grounds for dismissal, expedited motions to dismiss, and awards of attorney’s fees against the filing party. See “State Anti-Slapp Laws” <https://anti-slapp.org/your-states-free-speech-protection/#scorecard> [PDF attached]. Maryland’s statute is rated as a “D”, next to the lowest “F” rating. The attached chart rates Maryland’s law at “10” out of 100 points. Only Maryland and Virginia rate so low. The next lowest score is Florida at 21 points.

SB167 updates the Maryland law to provide better protection for free speech rights by discouraging litigants from commencing a lawsuit with the suppressive intent.

The MAJ requests a FAVORABLE Committee Report.

The Maryland Association for Justice urges a FAVORABLE Report on SB 167.

About Maryland Association for Justice

The Maryland Association for Justice (MAJ) represents over 1,250 trial attorneys throughout the state of Maryland. MAJ advocates for the preservation of the civil justice system, the protection of the rights of consumers and the education and professional development of its members.

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