

**CAROLYN A. QUATTROCKI**  
*Chief Deputy Attorney General*

**LEONARD J. HOWIE III**  
*Deputy Attorney General*

**CARRIE J. WILLIAMS**  
*Deputy Attorney General*

**ZENITA WICKHAM HURLEY**  
*Chief, Equity, Policy, and Engagement*



**STATE OF MARYLAND  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

**ANTHONY G. BROWN**  
*Attorney General*

**PETER V. BERNIS**  
*General Counsel*

**CHRISTIAN E. BARRERA**  
*Chief Operating Officer*

February 12, 2025

TO: The Honorable Delegate Luke Clippinger  
Chair, Judiciary Committee

FROM: Adam Spangler  
Legislative Aide, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: House Bill 435 - Courts - Jury Service - Disqualification- **Support**

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The Office of the Attorney General urges the Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on **House Bill 435**. Delegate Roberson's bill would relax the rules that have traditionally prohibited ex-offenders from serving on a jury. Under current law (§ 8-103(b)(4) of the Courts & Judicial Proceedings Article), anyone who is convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment for more than a year and who in fact receives a sentence of more than a year is permanently disqualified from jury service. The only exception under current law is if the person is pardoned (§ 8-103(c)).

**House Bill 435** would retain the restriction on jury service by persons convicted of a crime punishable by more than one year, but would limit the disqualification only to the time that the person is serving the sentence imposed for the conviction, including any term of probation. Once ex-offenders have served their sentence and probation, they would be free to serve on a jury despite the prior conviction. (The bill would also repeal, as no longer necessary, the proviso for qualification if a person has been pardoned.)

The bill advances sound policy, consistent with the legislature's prior actions to "ban the box" (2020 Md. Laws ch. 8) and to eliminate voting restrictions on persons with felony convictions once their sentence has been served (2007 Md. Laws ch. 159 & 2016 Md. Laws ch. 6)—measures that facilitate a person's transition back to being a contributing member of the community after serving a sentence.

For these reasons, the Office of the Attorney General urges a favorable report on **House Bill 435**.

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This bill letter is a statement of the Office of Attorney General's policy position on the referenced pending legislation. For a legal or constitutional analysis of the bill, Members of the House and Senate should consult with the Counsel to the General Assembly, Sandy Brantley. She can be reached at 410-946-5600 or [sbrantley@oag.state.md.us](mailto:sbrantley@oag.state.md.us).

cc: The Honorable Delegate Kent Roberson  
Judiciary Committee Members