



2025 POSITION PAPER HB 434

HB 434 Courts-Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation FAVORABLE

MAJ Position In Support of HB 434, Courts – Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation.

The Maryland Associations for Justice (MAJ) supports HB 434 which modernizes the existing SLAPP statute, Md. Ann. Code, *Courts and Judicial Proceedings Art. §5-807*, by modifying Maryland’s law to be consistent with 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. HB 434 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.

HB 434 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 HB 434.

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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State Anti-SLAPP Laws

Much of PPP's work focuses on state anti-SLAPP legislation. PPP works with state-based organizations and activists, as well as state legislators, to build support for anti-SLAPP legislation, strengthen existing anti-SLAPP laws, and protect those laws from being gutted.

Scroll or click below for two useful tools for those seeking more information about their state anti-SLAPP laws:

[State Anti-SLAPP Law Scorecard](#)[State Anti-SLAPP Reference Chart](#)

State Anti-SLAPP Law

Chart

Special thanks to the Institute for Free Speech for providing this score card in reference to states with Anti-SLAPP laws. If you wish to learn more about their scoring and grades you can learn more by hitting this button below.

Jurisdiction	Anti-SLAPP Law Procedures					Subscore
	Suspension of Court Proceedings Upon an Anti-SLAPP Motion	Burden of Proof on Plaintiff to Defeat an Anti-SLAPP Motion	Right to an Immediate Appeal	Award of Costs and Attorney Fees	Expansive Statutory Interpretation Instruction to Courts	
ULC Model Law	20	12	25	40	3	100
Arizona	9	6	13	10	0	38
Arkansas	20	12	0	10	0	42
California	18	12	25	38	3	96
Colorado	18	12	25	36	0	91
Connecticut	18	12	20	36	0	86
Delaware	5	12	0	10	0	27
District of Columbia	0	12	20	25	0	75
Florida	5	6	0	10	0	21
Georgia	20	12	25	40	3	100
Hawaii	20	12	25	40	3	100
Illinois	18	12	25	36	3	94
Indiana	18	0	0	36	0	54
Kansas	20	12	25	36	3	96
Kentucky	20	12	25	40	3	100
Louisiana	18	12	0	40	0	70
Maine	18	12	20	10	0	60
Maryland	10	0	0	0	0	10
Massachusetts	18	12	20	36	0	86
Missouri	18	0	5	36	0	59
Nebraska	5	12	0	10	0	27
Nevada	18	12	25	36	0	91
New Jersey	12	12	25	40	3	92
New Mexico	5	6	25	36	0	72
New York	20	12	25	40	0	97
Oklahoma	18	12	25	36	0	91
Oregon	18	12	25	40	3	98
Pennsylvania	2	6	25	36	0	69
Rhode Island	18	6	0	36	0	60
Tennessee	18	12	25	36	0	91
Texas	18	12	25	40	3	98
Utah	20	12	25	40	3	100
Vermont	18	12	25	36	0	91
Virginia	0	0	0	10	0	10
Washington	20	12	25	40	3	100

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