



House Bill 594

Date: February 19, 2025

Committee: House Judiciary

Position: Unfavorable

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 7,000 members and federated partners working to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

House Bill 594 (HB 594) would alter Maryland's current standard of contributory negligence by creating a separate comparative fault standard for motor vehicle accidents involving individuals defined under § 21-901.3 of the Transportation Article.

The Maryland Chamber has consistently stated its strong support for retaining the common law doctrine of contributory negligence because of the significant, negative economic effects a shift away from this doctrine would have on Maryland's economic climate. A shift to comparative fault would result in more lawsuits, higher costs, and higher insurance premiums for Maryland's employers and employees. As a result of more litigation and higher costs, Maryland's consumers would subsequently experience an increase in the cost of goods and a reduction in potential employment opportunities.

Contributory negligence remains the tort law standard for our economic competitors like Virginia and Washington, D.C., and a shift away from that standard would place Maryland in an even less competitive position for economic growth. Maryland is currently struggling to attract investment, generate businesses, and create jobs, and HB 594 would increase the cost of doing business in Maryland and directly compound these issues. **For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber respectfully requests an unfavorable report on HB 594.**