



Maryland State's Attorneys' Association

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DATE: February 20, 2025

BILL NUMBER: HB 993

POSITION: Favorable

The Maryland State's Attorneys' Association (MSAA) supports House Bill 993 and urges this Committee to issue a favorable report.

In Maryland, an individual – as well as their accomplices and co-conspirators – is guilty of murder in the first degree if someone is killed during the course of their commission of certain enumerated felonies, regardless of that individual's intent to kill. This provision, colloquially known as "felony murder," is designed to deter individuals from engaging in inherently dangerous felony offenses – crimes like arson or armed robbery – by holding them accountable for what the law establishes as a reasonably foreseeable consequence.

For this provision to have any meaningful deterrent effect, however, it must be widely known by Marylanders. Although ignorance of the law is no excuse, we must strive as a legal community to ensure the rules are understood by all. HB 993 requires county boards of education to develop and implement a curriculum that instructs middle school students of the consequences of a conviction for felony murder.¹ Education on this and other aspects of our criminal legal system will inure to the benefit of all Marylanders, as students will better understand and appreciate our system of adjudication and the protection the law affords.

¹ This Committee is scheduled to consider HB 994 as well – HB 994 is functionally identical to HB 993, except that it applies to Baltimore City instead of Maryland's counties. Both bills are supported by MSAA.