

HON. STACY A. MAYER
CIRCUIT COURT
JUDGE
BALTIMORE COUNTY
CHAIR

HON. RICHARD SANDY
CIRCUIT COURT
JUDGE
FREDERICK COUNTY
VICE-CHAIR



KELLEY O'CONNOR
ASSISTANT STATE COURT
ADMINISTRATOR
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS
P: (410) 260-1560

SUZANNE PELZ, ESQ.
SNR. GOVT. RELATIONS AND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
P: (410)260-1523

MARYLAND JUDICIAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM

TO: House Government, Labor and Elections Committee
FROM: Legislative Committee
Suzanne D. Pelz, Esq.
410-260-1523
RE: House Bill 1419
Department of State Police – Centralized Background Check
Division
DATE: February 26, 2026
(3/6)
POSITION: Oppose, as drafted

The Maryland Judiciary opposes House Bill 1419, as drafted. This bill would create a Centralized Background Check Division (the “Division”) in the Department of State Police. In sum, the bill would make the Division, in coordination with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, responsible for overseeing position-related background investigations of individuals who hold “regulated positions.”

Given the broad and vague definition of “regulated position,” it appears that the bill would make the Division responsible for completing background investigations for Judiciary employees and contractors, as they are required by Judiciary policy to have background checks. Currently, the Judiciary Human Resources Division completes background checks for Judiciary employees, including some judicial officers. Background checks for District Court Commissioners, who are also judicial officers, are completed through the District Court Commissioners’ Headquarters. The bill raises concerns regarding the confidentiality of the background-check process for judicial officers and the ability to be discreet in the process. Administrative control over the background-check process for Judiciary personnel and contractors should remain with the Judiciary. Current law recognizes that the Judiciary has broad authority to set its own

personnel policies. Accordingly, this bill, if enacted, would undermine existing statutory law by unnecessarily attempting to encroach on the Judiciary's authority to establish its own personnel policies.

Lastly, it is important to note that court personnel, because of their employment with the Judiciary, may already have some interaction with the Maryland State Police. Given this interaction, background checks for court personnel should remain separate from background investigations for the State Police. They should not be integrated within the Division.

cc. Hon. Jared Solomon
Judicial Council
Legislative Committee
Kelley O'Connor