

**Testimony in Favor With Amendments
Senate Bill 541
Judiciary Department - Judicial Removal - Disqualification From Future
Judicial Office**

Chair, Vice Chair, and distinguished members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

My name is **The Honorable, Dr. Cashenna A. Cross**, and I respectfully submit this testimony in support of Senate Bill 541 with amendments intended to preserve both accountability and constitutional fairness.

During more than two decades of military service and continued leadership in municipal government, I have learned that public trust is sustained only when those entrusted with authority are held to clear and consistent standards. The judiciary carries a unique responsibility, and confidence in its integrity is essential to the strength of our democratic institutions.

Senate Bill 541 advances an important objective. When judicial misconduct reaches the level that removal from office becomes necessary, the public must be assured that such conduct will not simply reappear in another judicial capacity. Accountability must be meaningful and visible to the communities our courts serve.

At the same time, constitutional language must reflect proportional justice. The bill, as drafted, treats removal and retirement in the same manner. Retirement, however, may occur because of disability or circumstances unrelated to misconduct. A permanent prohibition applied in every instance risks creating an unintended penalty inconsistent with fairness and due process.

Maryland's Constitution should reinforce integrity while preserving important legal distinctions. Judicial discipline is meant not only to address wrongdoing, but to uphold confidence through balanced and principled application of the law.

For that reason, I respectfully recommend amendments that:

- Limit permanent disqualification to cases involving proven serious misconduct;
- Preserve eligibility where retirement occurs for medical or non-disciplinary reasons;
- Require written findings following a full and fair hearing; and
- Allow the Supreme Court discretion to impose disqualification when warranted by the facts of the case.

These refinements strengthen, rather than weaken, accountability. They ensure that justice remains firm while also fair.

Having trained leaders responsible for critical decision-making and having served

communities that depend on confidence in government systems, I believe Maryland must model both ethical clarity and constitutional restraint.

With these amendments, Senate Bill 541 will promote judicial integrity while honoring the principles of fairness that define our legal system.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a **Favorable Report With Amendments**.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honorable, Dr. Cashenna A. Cross
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