

SB0251_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
01/29/2026
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TESTIMONY ON SB#0251 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Civil Actions - Maryland Uniform Public Expression Protection Act

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0251, **Civil Actions - Maryland Uniform Public Expression Protection Act**

The purpose of this bill is to protect Maryland residents from the weaponization of the judiciary to suppress dissent and to provide a challenge to the current deprivations by the Federal Government.

As documented by Greenpeace: ¹

SLAPP Lawsuits are a major way people in power silence dissent to conduct business without environmental or social accountability.

Powerful corporations have developed many tactics for silencing protests and public debate around unlawful or controversial activities. **SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) lawsuits and other forms of legal harassment are common strategies for [closing civic spaces and silencing opponents](#)** through isolation, intimidation, and financial and psychological burdens. They are a major way people in power silence dissent to conduct business without environmental or social accountability.

Numerous examples of weaponization exist. “Trump has used SLAPP tactics against opponents as a private (really rich) citizen. [Seven cases](#) of the [thousands of lawsuits](#) he has been party to have been efforts to silence authors, media, and individuals. In his SLAPP case against author Tim O’Brien, Trump said “**I spent a couple of bucks on legal fees, and they spent a whole lot more. I did it to make his life miserable, which I’m happy about**”. Allies of Trump, like Big Oil and other corporate billionaires, would likely benefit from a lack of interference by a Trump administration if they levy SLAPP cases against critics.” ²

This bill will accomplish its purposes by repealing a certain provision relating to strategic lawsuits against public participation; authorizing a person served with a pleading asserting a certain cause of action based on the person's communication related to a governmental proceeding or exercise of certain constitutional rights to file a special motion for expedited relief to dismiss the cause of action; generally relating to civil actions and public expression; and applying the Act prospectively. It will add significant protection for Marylanders from this conduct.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0251.

¹ <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/trump-slapps-and-the-erosion-of-democratic-freedoms/>

² *ibid*