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**Bill:** SB 544 – Courtroom Security - Minimum Adequate Security Standard

**Committee:** Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**Position:** Favorable

**Date:** February 16, 2026

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The Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) **supports** Senate Bill 544 - Courtroom Security - Minimum Adequate Security Standard. Through its advocacy committees and various practice-specific sections, MSBA monitors and takes positions on legislation that protects the legal profession, preserves the integrity of the judicial system, and ensures access to justice for Marylanders.

Court security and access remains a core priority for MSBA. Justice depends on everyone's safety. Judges and attorneys must be able to decide and present cases without concerns for their welfare or for their family. Litigants must be able to come to court and seek justice without fear.

These threats are very real in Maryland and across the country. A 2024 survey of state judges found that over 82% worry about their safety and over 56% have been personally threatened.<sup>i</sup> Nationally, the U.S. Marshals Service reported 176 threats in just the first month of 2026, showing an escalating trend of violence in the judiciary.<sup>ii</sup>

For our members, the courtroom is their office. They should not have to navigate threats and violence in courtrooms or fear walking in and out of parking lots as part of their professional lives. Our members cannot opt-out and choose not to appear in court. They have taken an oath and have a duty to represent their clients in high-conflict situations, making standardized security a necessity.

Last year, we came before you to advocate for minimum courtroom security standards. This bill takes the next necessary step to continue implementing these protections statewide through a phased-in approach. It is essential to create and support a standard that our members and the public need.

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We urge the Committee to continue its commitment to court safety and respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 544.

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<sup>i</sup> Perceptions and Experiences With Judicial Security Threats: A Survey of U.S. State Court Judges, Court Review (2024). <https://nationalcenterforstatecourts.app.box.com/v/AmJudgesCourtReviewArchive/file/1699377897310>

<sup>ii</sup> Protective Investigations – Threat Statistics, U.S. Marshals Service (through January 30, 2026). <https://www.usmarshals.gov/what-we-do/judicial-security/protective-investigations-threat-statistics>