

SB0541 – Judicial Removal – Disqualification From

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Position: FAV



TESTIMONY

SB0541 – Judicial Removal – Disqualification From Future Judicial Office

Bill Sponsor: Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee (By Request – Maryland Judicial Conference)

Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, Cochair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in support of SB0541 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are an association of unpaid citizen advocates—individuals and grassroots groups in every district—representing more than 30,000 Marylanders.

SB0541 proposes a constitutional amendment to ensure that any judge removed from office or retired upon recommendation of the Commission on Judicial Disabilities is permanently disqualified from serving again. If a judge's conduct is serious enough to warrant removal, the public should not have to worry about that person returning to the bench.

It is unfortunate that we even need a bill like this. In a time when shame and empathy seem to be in short supply, clear standards of accountability matter more than ever. Marylanders deserve to know that those entrusted with judicial power are held to the highest ethical expectations.

SB0541 supports the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition by strengthening transparency, accountability, and public trust. People are far more willing to engage with their government when they believe the system is fair and that misconduct is taken seriously.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on SB0541.

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Uploaded by: Rebecca Turner

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY

SB0541 – Judicial Removal – Disqualification From Future Judicial Office

Bill Sponsor: Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee (By Request – Maryland Judicial Conference)

Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting:

Person Submitting: Rebecca M. Turner

Position: **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in support of SB0541 on behalf of myself.

SB0541 proposes a constitutional amendment to ensure that any judge removed from office or retired upon recommendation of the Commission on Judicial Disabilities is permanently disqualified from serving again. If a judge's conduct is serious enough to warrant removal, the public should not have to worry about that person returning to the bench.

It is unfortunate that we even need a bill like this. In a time when shame and empathy seem to be in short supply, clear standards of accountability matter more than ever. Marylanders deserve to know that those entrusted with judicial power are held to the highest ethical expectations.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on SB0541.

Rebecca M. Turner

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SB0541 – MSBA Support Letter (2026.02.16 - Judicia

Uploaded by: Shaoli Sarkar

Position: FAV



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Bill: SB 541 - Judiciary Department - Judicial Removal - Disqualification From Future Judicial Office

Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Position: Favorable

Date: February 16, 2026

The Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) **supports** Senate Bill 541 - Judiciary Department - Judicial Removal - Disqualification From Future Judicial Office, providing that a justice or judge removed or retired from office upon a recommendation of the Commission on Judicial Disabilities is not eligible for future judicial office. 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.

The bill eliminates any confusion and clearly restricts a justice or judge removed or retired from office on recommendations from the Commission on Judicial Disabilities under Article IV, § 4B from future judicial office. The finality of this disqualification is essential to ensure public trust in the court system.

For these reasons, MSBA respectfully urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 541.

Contact: Shaoli Sarkar, Advocacy Director (shaoli@msba.org, 410-387-5606)

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SB541_Cross_FavorableWithAmendments.pdf

Uploaded by: Dr Cashenna A Cross

Position: FWA

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
Councilwoman-at-Large, City of Glenarden
Municipal Advocate
571-719-8784