

# HOUSE BILL 521

C1

5lr1845  
CF SB 459

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By: **Delegate Kramer**

Introduced and read first time: February 11, 2015

Assigned to: Economic Matters

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Committee Report: Favorable

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 13, 2015

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## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Corporations and Real Estate Investment Trusts – Directors and Trustees –**  
3 **Duties and Immunity From Liability**

4 FOR the purpose of clarifying the duties of a director of a corporation and the manner in  
5 which a director must act; clarifying that a director who acts in accordance with a  
6 certain provision of law shall have certain immunity from liability; clarifying that a  
7 director of a corporation is not required to act solely because of the effect the act may  
8 have on, or the amount or type of consideration offered or paid to stockholders in,  
9 certain transactions involving the corporation; clarifying that an act of a director of  
10 a corporation relating to or affecting certain transactions involving the corporation  
11 may not be subject to a certain duty or scrutiny; repealing a limitation on the  
12 enforcement of a duty of a director; clarifying that certain provisions of law are the  
13 sole source of duties of a director of a corporation to the corporation or its  
14 stockholders, and apply to any act of a director; clarifying the circumstances under  
15 which a director of a corporation is immune from certain liability; making certain  
16 provisions of law relating to certain duties and immunity from liability of a director  
17 of a corporation applicable to a trustee of a real estate investment trust; defining a  
18 certain term; providing for the application of certain provisions of this Act; making  
19 certain conforming and stylistic changes; and generally relating to directors of a  
20 corporation.

21 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
22 Article – Corporations and Associations  
23 Section 2–401(a), 2–405.1, and 8–601.1  
24 Annotated Code of Maryland

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



(2014 Replacement Volume)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings  
Section 5–417  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2013 Replacement Volume and 2014 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

**Article – Corporations and Associations**

2–401.

(a) [The] **ALL** business and affairs of a corporation, **WHETHER OR NOT IN THE ORDINARY COURSE**, shall be managed **BY OR** under the direction of a board of directors.

2–405.1.

**(A) IN THIS SECTION, “ACT” INCLUDES, AS THE CONTEXT REQUIRES:**

**(1) AN ACT, AN OMISSION, A FAILURE TO ACT, OR A DETERMINATION MADE NOT TO ACT; OR**

**(2) TO ACT, OMIT TO ACT, FAIL TO ACT, OR MAKE A DETERMINATION NOT TO ACT.**

**(B) THIS SECTION APPLIES TO ACTS OF AN INDIVIDUAL WHO:**

**(1) IS OR WAS A DIRECTOR OF A CORPORATION; AND**

**(2) IS ACTING OR ACTED AS A DIRECTOR OF A CORPORATION.**

**[(a)] (C) A director OF A CORPORATION shall [perform his duties as a director, including his duties as a member of a committee of the board on which he serves] ACT:**

**(1) In good faith;**

**(2) In a manner [he] THE DIRECTOR reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the corporation; and**

**(3) With the care that an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would use under similar circumstances.**

1           **[(b)] (D)**     (1)    [In performing his duties, a] **A** director is entitled to rely on any  
2 information, opinion, report, or statement, including any financial statement or other  
3 financial data, prepared or presented by:

4                       (i)     An officer or employee of the corporation whom the director  
5 reasonably believes to be reliable and competent in the matters presented;

6                       (ii)    A lawyer, certified public accountant, or other person, as to a  
7 matter which the director reasonably believes to be within the person's professional or  
8 expert competence; or

9                       (iii)   A committee of the board on which the director does not serve, as  
10 to a matter within its designated authority, if the director reasonably believes the  
11 committee to merit confidence.

12                      (2)    A director is not acting in good faith if [he] **THE DIRECTOR** has any  
13 knowledge concerning the matter in question which would cause [such] **THE** reliance to be  
14 unwarranted.

15           **[(c)] (E)**     A [person] **DIRECTOR** who [performs his duties] **ACTS** in accordance  
16 with the standard **OF CONDUCT** provided in this section shall have the immunity from  
17 liability described under § 5-417 of the Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article.

18           **[(d)] (F)**     The [duty of the directors of a corporation] **STANDARD OF CONDUCT**  
19 **PROVIDED IN THIS SECTION** does not require [them] **A DIRECTOR OF A CORPORATION**  
20 to:

21                      (1)    [Accept] **ACT TO ACCEPT**, recommend, or respond on behalf of the  
22 corporation to [any] A proposal by an acquiring person as defined in § 3-801 of this article;

23                      (2)    [Authorize] **ACT TO AUTHORIZE** the corporation to redeem any rights  
24 under, modify, or render inapplicable, a stockholder rights plan;

25                      (3)    [Elect] **ACT TO ELECT** on behalf of the corporation to be subject to or  
26 refrain from electing on behalf of the corporation to be subject to any or all of the provisions  
27 of Title 3, Subtitle 8 of this article;

28                      (4)    [Make] **ACT TO MAKE** a determination under the provisions of Title 3,  
29 Subtitle 6 or Subtitle 7 of this article; or

30                      (5)    Act [or fail to act] solely because of:

31                               (i)     The effect the act [or failure to act] may have on an acquisition  
32 or potential acquisition of control of the corporation; or

1 (ii) The amount or type of [any] consideration that may be offered or  
 2 paid to stockholders **OF THE CORPORATION** in an acquisition **OR POTENTIAL**  
 3 **ACQUISITION OF CONTROL OF THE CORPORATION.**

4 [(e)] **(G)** An act of a director of a corporation is presumed to [satisfy the  
 5 standards of subsection (a)] **BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (C)** of this section.

6 [(f)] **(H)** An act of a director **OF A CORPORATION** relating to or affecting an  
 7 acquisition or a potential acquisition of control of [a] **THE corporation OR ANY OTHER**  
 8 **TRANSACTION OR POTENTIAL TRANSACTION INVOLVING THE CORPORATION** may not  
 9 be subject to a higher duty or greater scrutiny than is applied to any other act of a director.

10 [(g) Nothing in this section creates a duty of any director of a corporation  
 11 enforceable otherwise than by the corporation or in the right of the corporation.]

12 **(I) THIS SECTION:**

13 **(1) IS THE SOLE SOURCE OF DUTIES OF A DIRECTOR TO THE**  
 14 **CORPORATION OR THE STOCKHOLDERS OF THE CORPORATION, WHETHER OR NOT A**  
 15 **DECISION HAS BEEN MADE TO ENTER INTO AN ACQUISITION OR POTENTIAL**  
 16 **ACQUISITION OF CONTROL OF THE CORPORATION OR ENTER INTO ANY OTHER**  
 17 **TRANSACTION INVOLVING THE CORPORATION; AND**

18 **(2) APPLIES TO ANY ACT OF A DIRECTOR, INCLUDING AN ACT AS A**  
 19 **MEMBER OF A COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.**

20 8-601.1.

21 Sections 2-201(c), 2-313, [2-405.1(d) through (g),] 2-502(e), and 2-504(f) **OF THIS**  
 22 **ARTICLE AND, EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED IN § 8-601 OF THIS SUBTITLE OR**  
 23 **IN THE DECLARATION OF TRUST, § 2-405.1** of this article shall apply to real estate  
 24 investment trusts.

25 **Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings**

26 5-417.

27 **(A) IN THIS SECTION, “ACT” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 2-405.1 OF THE**  
 28 **CORPORATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS ARTICLE.**

29 **(B) A [person] PRESENT OR FORMER DIRECTOR OF A CORPORATION** who  
 30 **[performs the duties of that person] WHILE A DIRECTOR ACTS OR ACTED** in accordance  
 31 with the standard **OF CONDUCT** provided [under] **IN § 2-405.1** of the Corporations and

1 Associations Article has no liability [by reason of being or having been a director of a  
2 corporation] **IN ANY ACTION BASED ON AN ACT OF THE DIRECTOR.**

3 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
4 October 1, 2015.

Approved:

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Governor.

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Speaker of the House of Delegates.

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President of the Senate.