

State of Maryland

Commission on Civil Rights

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”



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February 24, 2021

House Bill 950 – Judges - Community and Cultural Awareness Training **POSITION: Support**

Dear Chairperson Clippinger, Vice Chairperson Atterbeary, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for the enforcement of laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and state contracts based upon race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, and source of income.

House Bill 950 requires the State Court Administrator to ensure that each Judge receives annual training on community and cultural awareness, including (1) anti-discrimination training, (2) anti-racial bias training, (3) implicit bias training, (4) procedural justice training, (5) training on reconciliation techniques, and (6) anti-blackness training.

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights supports HB950 because anti-discrimination training that provides insight on both historic and systemic injustice affects not only the participant but also all of those with whom they interact. When considering the impactful relationship between citizens, public servants and members of the judiciary, the proposed training has the potential to promote immediate, widespread change.

MCCR’s Education & Outreach Unit provides diversity and anti-discrimination training to thousands of Marylanders annually including employees of the Maryland Judiciary, most recently the Diversity and Inclusion Education Subcommittee of the Judiciary’s newly formed Equal Justice Committee. MCCR is confident that providing increased, mandatory training on the topics identified in HB950 to both the employees and judges of the Maryland Judiciary may potentially result in a substantial reduction of discrimination, bias, and exclusion statewide.

For these reasons and more, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable vote on HB950. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to improve and promote civil rights in Maryland.