

DEBRA M. DAVIS, ESQ.
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Charles County

Judiciary Committee

Subcommittees

Juvenile Law

Public Safety



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Chair Clippinger and Vice Chair Atterbeary
House Judiciary Committee
House Office Building Room 101
Annapolis, MD 21401

March 5, 2021

Dear Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary and Committee Members:

I am pleased to present House Bill 1331 – Maryland Criminal Justice Debt Elimination and Prevention Act of 2021. This legislation aims to eliminate criminal justice debt by ending fines and fees related to restitution charges, court costs, and other fees charged to individuals interacting with our state’s criminal justice system. Maryland’s criminal justice system should not be funded by the people it so often abuses. HB 1331 is an important step in reforming Maryland’s criminal justice system.

Currently, Marylanders who are within the criminal justice system can be subjected to a number of court-related fines and fees. The fines and fees that Marylanders are currently subjected to include parole and probation fees, GPS monitoring/home detention, criminal record expungement, jail room and board, and more. The excessive fines and fees that are imposed through the state’s justice system creates an undue burden on all Marylanders, especially indigent Marylanders. Additionally, research shows that black and brown people are arrested at disproportionate rates. As a result, people from these communities are more likely to be subjected to the excessive and unfair fines and fees found throughout Maryland’s criminal justice system. It is time that we protect all Marylanders from unnecessary fines and fees, especially our minority and indigent communities.

House Bill 1331 aims to end the excessive criminal justice related fines and fees that Marylanders throughout the state are subjected to. The criminal justice system should not be funded by the very people who are consistently abused by it. I urge the committee to pass this bold and innovative legislation to reshape our criminal justice system.

For the above reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 1331.

Sincerely,

Delegate Debra M. Davis
District 28, Charles County