



SENATE BILL 118 & SENATE BILL 119

Civil Jury Trials – Amount in Controversy

February 18, 2010

POSITION: Support

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

On behalf of the members of the *Restaurant Association of Maryland*, we support SB 118 and SB 119.

As an industry that serves food and beverages in facilities that are open to the public, our members are highly susceptible to civil legal action. For our industry, such claims can arise from simple slips and falls to food poisoning, burns, potentially fatal allergic reactions and other more serious cases. With the high cost of health care and wage inflation over the last decade, many of these claims can easily exceed the current \$10,000 threshold above which costlier, lengthier jury trials may be requested.

We believe that increasing the jurisdictional amount to \$20,000 will serve to benefit plaintiffs, defendants, the courts and potential jurors who are currently giving more time to our judicial system than is necessary. District Court judges can easily and efficiently handle many of these cases.

For these reasons, we support SB 118 and SB 119 and request a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Melvin R. Thompson
Senior Vice President
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