



Government Relations and Public Affairs Division

**Statement of
the Hon. Mary Ellen Barbera
Chief Judge
Maryland Court of Appeals
March 6, 2018**

Good afternoon. Thank you for taking the time to be here today, with little notice, for this emergency meeting. On Monday—yesterday—the Court of Appeals Standing Committee on the Rules of Practice and Procedure brought an error to the attention of the Court.

Over the past several days, there have been multiple reports in the media on the implementation of what is now Maryland Rule 16-910 as it pertains to the Maryland Judiciary's online court database, Case Search, specifically the exclusion of law enforcement officers' names from online access. Questions have been raised as to the motivation behind the change.

What we know, from the Chair of the Rules Committee and from the record, is that this deletion was an error, an honest mistake, an amendment not intended to be included that went unnoticed until the programming changes in Case Search were implemented. We are here today to address the issue, hear from those most affected, and make the best decision on how to move forward.

In closing, I would note that the Maryland Rules are the responsibility of this Court. The Rules Committee serves solely as an advisory body to the Court, and has done so ably. This Court, and only this Court, has the power to adopt changes to the Rules. We, the members of the Court of Appeals, adopted the 193rd report, and we take responsibility for any error therein.

The buck stops here. We are accountable. We will address this error. Today, we will listen to those who wish to testify, and then we will determine how to resolve this error in the manner that best serves the public interest.