

# MARYLAND ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION

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## MARYLAND ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION

*15 May 2012*  
*9:30 a.m.*  
*Annapolis, Maryland*

### SUMMARY OF COMMISSION MEETING

- 1. *Legislative Update.*** HB265, the Commission's initiative which would have created a task force on a civil right to counsel did not pass this session. HB751, which would have prohibited certain activities by law school clinics, was withdrawn. HB1238, which precludes the state from charging interest against the MLSC fund, passed and was pending signature. It was also noted that a mediation confidentiality bill passed.
- 2. *Fee Waiver Update.*** The General Services Subcommittee of the Rules Committee was generally supportive of the proposal.
- 3. *Donation Page.*** Results of the pro bono donation page were included in the materials and show the page generated over \$55,000 in unverified donations.
- 4. *Beyond Compliance.*** The Commission reviewed a document prepared by the Critical Barriers Committee that includes recommendations for courts and legal services providers to make websites, facilities, and practices more accessible. The Commission endorsed and adopted the document.

5. **Video Scripts.** The Public Education Committee presented three scripts on topics relevant for the public: *Should I Represent Myself?*, *Hiring & Working with Your Lawyer*, and *Service of Process*. The Commission approved all three scripts, and approved *Hiring & Working With* subject to input from the MSBA.
6. **Access to Court Records & Expungement Brochures.** The Commission reviewed the text of four planned brochures designed to enhance the public’s understanding of access to court records, how to shield documents that would otherwise be public, and the expungement process. The Commission approved the brochures.

## 7. Committee Reports

- a. **SRL Committee.** Chief Judge Clyburn and the District Court Administrative Judges recently met with the MD/DC Creditors Bar Association to discuss fraudulent service of process, i.e. “sewer service.” The association intends to raise these issues with their members and ask them to hold their process servers accountable.

The Committee recently heard a presentation on issues and implications for SRLs with the development of MDEC. Issues will include fees, access to e-filing, document assembly, smartforms, form readability and accessibility, electronic notification for users, and training.

- b. **Public Education Committee.** The Committee has permission to use the *Thurgood* production for an educational initiative among high school students. We will be approaching the public schools to see if we can develop a program. The People’s Law Library continues to see a significant increase in usage. They are getting 1.6 million hits per month, and 33,000 unique IP addresses per month.
- c. **Critical Barriers Committee.** The Committee has been looking at access to justice for incarcerated persons. The Language Access Subcommittee continues to explore the possibility of developing an interpreter bank for legal services providers. We hope to broaden the discussion to needs of immigrants and also access to justice issues related to human trafficking, especially juveniles.
- d. **Definitions, Standards & Awards.** Kathy Howard reported that the Commission presented awards to this year’s Access to Justice Award Winners at the Judicial Conference:
- Judge of the Year: Hon. Karen Murphy Jensen and Hon. Joseph F. Murphy, Jr.
  - Executive Branch: Lt. Gov. Anthony Brown
  - Judicial Branch Excellence: Connie Kratovil-Lavelle
  - Outstanding Program: District Court Self-Help Center operated by Maryland Legal Aid
  - Legislator of the Year: Del. Sandy Rosenberg and Sen. Jamie Raskin