

be filed and heard in the District Court. Expanding the exclusive jurisdiction for the District Court has an impact on the ability of a litigant to request a trial by jury, and precludes discovery in cases that may involve relatively minor amounts in potential damages, but have a real impact in the life of citizens.

The established jurisdictional amounts for our court system are designed to carefully balance the cases considered by the District Court and circuit courts in order to protect the rights of the individuals involved in legal actions. The disruption of this balance created by increasing the established jurisdictional amount in controversy may unfairly prejudice plaintiffs by limiting their rights. I agree with the Maryland State Bar Association's stated reluctance to change jurisdictional amounts unless supported by substantial evidence that such a change is warranted. House Bill 70 does not provide the compelling evidence necessary to alter the current law. This concern prompted the Maryland Trial Lawyers' Association to request a veto of this bill last year.

For the above reasons, I have vetoed House Bill 70.

Sincerely,
Parris N. Glendening
Governor

House Bill No. 70

AN ACT concerning

District Court - Small Claim Actions

FOR the purpose of altering the minimum amount in controversy in civil cases over which the District Court of Maryland and the circuit courts have concurrent jurisdiction; altering the amount of a small claim action in the District Court; altering the amount in controversy in a civil action in the District Court in which formal pleadings are prohibited; altering the minimum amount in controversy in civil cases in which appeals from the District Court are required to be heard on the record; providing for the application of this Act; and generally relating to small claim actions in the District Court.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article - Courts and Judicial Proceedings

Section 4-402(d)(1)(i), 4-405, 6-403, and 12-401(f)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(1998 Replacement Volume and 2001 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article - Courts and Judicial Proceedings