Judiciary Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5535 / Bill Status / Public Hearing Testimony
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICE OF THE CLAIMS COMMISSIONER AND REVIEW OF WRONGFUL INCARCERATION AWARDS BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.
Vote Date: 3/30/2026
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 3/16/2026
File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Judiciary Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill comes at the request of the Claims Commissioner in order to improve the claims process; it extends the time for claims to be reviewed.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

The substitute language removes the extension of jurisdiction for the Office of the Claims Commissioner and changes the effective date of the bill to “effective from passage”.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Judicial Branch, External Affairs Division: They testified neither in support nor opposition to the bill, stating a neutral position on the bill’s policy. They raised procedural concerns regarding the appeal process in section 1(c), recommending clearer requirements for the Claims Commissioner to create an adequate record for appellate review and clarifying how appellate fee waiver requests should be handled.

Robert Shea, Commissioner, Office of the Claims Commissioner: He testified in support of H.B. 5535, stating that the Office has the capacity to handle additional work. He supports allowing it to retain and decide smaller claims under $15,000 which are currently filed with the office, instead of dismissing them and directing claimants to Superior Court. They emphasized the change would improve efficiency and reduce burden on pro se claimants while maintaining access to court for larger claims or those filed directly in Superior Court.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Trevor Ellis **Date:** April 10, 2026