Testimony SB0136 Mahasin El Amin.pdf
Uploaded by: Mahasin El Amin
Position: FAV

Testimony of Mahasin El Amin, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Prince George's County

Thank you, Chairman Smith, Vice Chairman Waldstreicher, and members of the committee, for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 136. For the record, my name is Mahasin El Amin, Clerk of the Circuit Court for Prince George's County.

The Clerks of the Circuit Court support SB 136, transferring the authority to designate a deputy clerk to perform a marriage ceremony, from the county administrative judge of the circuit court to the clerk of the circuit court in each county.

Currently, Judges, Clerks of the Circuit Court, and Deputy Clerks of the Circuit Court are authorized to perform civil marriage ceremonies in the State of Maryland, under the authority granted in section 2-406 of the Family Law Article. Judges and Clerks have direct authority to perform civil marriage ceremonies, but Deputy Clerks must be designated by the Administrative Judge in each county. This means that even though Clerks have direct authority to perform marriage ceremonies, we must request and receive approval from our local Administrative Judge any time we would like to assign one of our staff to assist us in performing marriage ceremonies in the courthouse.

In Prince George's County, my manager sends me a request to make a change in the designation of who can perform marriage ceremonies. I in turn, send a request to the administrative judge requesting that an administrative order be passed identifying the names of the employees who I would like designated. Then the administrative judge must draft an and issue an order. In a large jurisdiction such as Prince George's County, this process is inefficient

considering our turnover and business needs. Additionally, the Clerks believe this requirement

to be an unnecessary bureaucratic step and an infringement of the authority of the elected

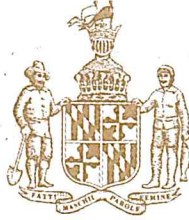Clerk to direct the work of our own staff.

Therefore, the Circuit Court Clerks hope you will give a favorable report on SB 136, and

we would like to thank Senator Jackson for sponsoring this bill. Thank you for the opportunity

to comment, and I am available if you have any questions.

SB136JacksonTestimony2024.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Jackson

Position: FAV

MICHAEL A. JACKSON
Legislative District 27
Calvert, Charles and
Prince George's Counties

———

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Chair, Pensions

Public Safety, Transportation, and
Environment

Annapolis Office
Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Suite 3 West
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3700 · 301-858-3700
800-492-7122 *Ext.* 3700
Michael.Jackson@senate.state.md.us

District Office
250 Merrimac Court
Prince Frederick, Maryland 20678

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY - SENATE BILL 136

FAMILY LAW – MARRIAGE CEREMONY – DESIGNATION OF DEPUTY CLERK

JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

JANUARY 11, 2024

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Committee Members:

Senate Bill 136 is a very straightforward bill that simply allows for the deputization of Deputy Clerks of the Court to perform marriage ceremonies throughout Maryland.

This piece of legislation that merely allows for more efficiency in the offices of Clerks of the Court throughout our State. Elected Clerks of the Court in Maryland perform thousands of marriage ceremonies each year. Local Clerks of the Court have a myriad of responsibilities in addition to performing marriage ceremonies and their schedules are often incredibly full. Allowing these elected officials to delegate some of their authority to their Deputy Clerks would provide them with the flexibility to more efficiently carry out their other duties and more effectively serve the public.

Individuals wishing to be married in their local courthouse could be more effectively served if they didn't have to wait to schedule appointments with their elected Clerks but were instead allowed to be married by Deputy Clerks designated by their elected Clerks.

For the reasons listed above, I ask for a favorable report of Senate Bill 136.

Testimony SB0136 Designation for Marriage Ceremony
Uploaded by: Scott Poyer
Position: FAV

SB0136   Family Law - Marriage Ceremony - Designation of Deputy Clerk
Judicial Proceedings Committee – January 11, 2023
Sponsor: Senator Michael Jackson
Position: Favorable

Testimony of Scott Poyer, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Anne Arundel County

Thank you, Chairman Smith, Vice Chairman Waldstreicher, and members of the committee, for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 136. For the record, my name is Scott Poyer, Clerk of the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County.

The Clerks of the Circuit Court support SB 136, transferring the authority to designate a deputy clerk to perform a marriage ceremony, from the county administrative judge of the circuit court to the clerk of the circuit court in each county.

Generations ago, Judges were involved in performing marriage ceremonies in Maryland. In the 1700's weddings which were not performed by clergy were performed by Judges. However, since at least 1963, this function has largely been transferred to the Clerks of the Circuit Court. Today, the Clerks and our staff issue approximately 30-40,000 marriage licenses and conduct 10-20,000 marriage ceremonies in a typical year. The only involvement of Judges these days is in performing an occasional marriage ceremony themselves, which may amount to a few weddings a year. As a practical matter, the Clerks believe that allowing us direct authority to designate our staff to conduct the wedding ceremonies that our office is responsible for, would be more efficient and better reflect current practice.

The Circuit Court Clerks hope you will give a favorable report on SB 136, and we would like to thank Senator Jackson for sponsoring this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and I am available if you have any questions.