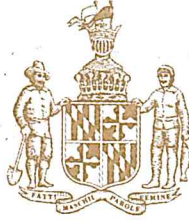


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***TESTIMONY - SENATE BILL 136***  
***FAMILY LAW – MARRIAGE CEREMONY –***  
***DESIGNATION OF DEPUTY CLERK***  
***JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE***  
***JANUARY 11, 2024***

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.**