



TESTIMONY FOR HB0044

Election Law – Circuit Court Judges – Nonpartisan Elections

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Wu

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB0044 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Circuit Court judges play a very important judicial role in making judgements on appeals. We have learned that many people in appointed positions are now appointed on the basis of their party affiliation and not on their merits. Because of this, we need a process to make sure that people that staff this critical position are elected on a nonpartisan basis.

This bill sets the requirements for electing Circuit Court judges utilizing the current process for electing those who seek public office. However, each judge that files to be a candidate will not state their party affiliation. They will then go through the primary and general election process.

The members of the public should have an opportunity to understand the qualifications of judges and be able to vote for those they feel are best able to do the job. We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.