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Member

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Substitute Member

Alexander C. Vincent
Substitute Member



Montgomery County Board of Elections
18753 N. Frederick Avenue, Suite 210
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20879

Boris Brajkovic
Election Director

Vacant
Deputy Election Director

Janet A. Ross
IT Manager

Sandra Prudenti
Voter Services Manager

Mindy Williams
Operations Manager

Vacant
Recruitment & Election Support Manager

Kevin Karpinski
Counsel

**TESTIMONY BY BOARD PRESIDENT DAVID A. NAIMON ON SENATE BILL 534
REGARDING ELECTION JUDGE COMPENSATION
HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE 3-25-2025**

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee, my name is David Naimon and thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I'd also like to thank Senators Kagan and Gallion (and Delegate Jones in the House) for introducing this important legislation to assist local Boards of Elections in recruiting election judges. I'm the President of the Montgomery County Board of Elections and our county board unanimously on a bipartisan basis supports HB 586 as it was passed by the House and SB 534 as introduced in the Senate (without the Senate-passed amendment). We urge you to amend this important legislation back to its original form and the form you previously supported.

We always need more election judges than we have, and SB 534 as introduced (and HB 586 as passed by the House) would take *two* important steps to help us recruit and retain election judges and get them to serve at Early Voting and/or Election Day. First, it would only allow local Boards to pay election judges if they actually serve at Early Voting and/or Election Day. The problem this provision is addressing is real, not hypothetical. In 2022 in Montgomery County alone, we had almost 300 people for the primary election and more than 200 people for the general election who completed and got paid for election judge training without serving either at Early Voting or on Election Day. Those hundreds of election judges not only didn't show up for their service but also took up training slots that could have been used by others. We assume other jurisdictions have a proportionally similar number.

Second, SB 534 as introduced (and HB 586 as passed by the House) would allow public school students who serve as election judges to receive *both* student service learning (SSL) hours and the election judge compensation that other election judges receive, rather than requiring the students to pick between the two. The Senate amendment requires these young election judges to choose *between* SSL hours *or* pay, which merely codifies the current practice.

We're very proud of the roughly 10% of our Montgomery County election judges who are ages 16 or 17 – they are among our most dedicated and hard-working election judges, and they are the election judges for in-person voting for the future. In addition to serving us in the current elections, good election judges of any age who share their experiences with others are an effective antidote to misinformation about how elections really work, and young election judges not only can continue to serve us as election judges but also can help us educate the voters of the future for years to come, even after they are no longer serving as election judges. While many 16 and 17-year-olds already have earned the SSL hours they need for graduation, by increasing their incentives to serve, this bill would help us to recruit even more young election judges and help us to boost our pool of election judges for the future.

We urge you to support SB 534 as introduced (and continue to support HB 586 as passed by the House). Thank you for the opportunity to share our views with you today.