

HB0822 Circuit Court Clerks and Registers of Wills – Maximum Salary
Judiciary – February 18, 2026
Sponsor: Delegate Sandy Bartlett
Position: Favorable

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

Thank you, Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the committee, for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 822. For the record, my name is Scott Poyer, Clerk of the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County. I am also representing the 24 elected Clerks of the Circuit Court in Maryland.

The Circuit Court Clerks are the administrative arm of the court, but we are truly the heartbeat of the courthouse. We are often the first point of contact for the public. People cannot speak directly to judges, and usually must engage an attorney before obtaining legal advice, which often comes at a cost many cannot afford. While we cannot give legal advice, we can direct people to resources, and most importantly, we listen to their concerns and treat them with kindness and compassion as they navigate a complicated and often intimidating process.

Collectively, Clerks oversee more than 1,500 employees statewide and handle about 200,000 new case filings every year. The job we do, largely behind the scenes, impacts people's lives. Among our many responsibilities, we make sure that millions of pages of documents related to these cases are processed in a timely and efficient manner. When a matter is before a judge, the Clerks are the ones to make sure the case is in the right place at the right time. When a judge sentences a defendant to incarceration, we ensure that sentence is properly recorded so there are no mistakes releasing someone too soon or keeping them longer than

they should. We also ensure guardians are assigned to care for vulnerable individuals and process audits to make sure property is not stolen.

Beyond the courtroom, we serve as the recorder of deeds, maintaining land records that drive Maryland's economy. We record transactions worth billions and collect over 400 million dollars in land record revenues annually. Without the circuit court clerks, the real estate market stalls. We also preserve history, people come to us to look up marriage records and land titles. We process expungements that give individuals a second chance. In addition, we act as the "justice of the peace," issuing approximately 40,000 marriage licenses annually and performing approximately 16,000 wedding ceremonies each year, moments that matter deeply to Maryland families.

I ask for a favorable report on HB 822, and I would like to thank Chair Bartlett for sponsoring this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and I am available if you have any questions.