

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2002 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 753

(Howard County Delegation)

Judiciary

Judicial Proceedings

---

Howard County – Orphans’ Court - Compensation of Judges  
Ho. Co. 13-02

---

This bill increases the annual salary of Howard County Orphans’ Court associate judges from \$6,380 annually to \$8,000 annually. The bill also increases the annual salary of the Howard County Orphans’ Court chief judge from \$7,400 annually to \$9,500 annually.

The salary increases take effect at the beginning of the next term of office.

---

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None. The bill would not directly affect State operations or finances.

**Local Effect:** Expenditures by Howard County would increase by an estimated \$2,900 (including fringe benefits) in FY 2003 due to the January 1, 2003 effective date of anticipated salary increases. Full year expenditure increases beginning in FY 2004 would be approximately \$5,800.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

---

Analysis

**Current Law:** The associate judges for the Howard County Orphans’ Court currently earn \$6,380 annually, while the chief judge earns \$7,400 annually. Compensation and allowances for an orphans’ court judge are set by statute.

**Background:** An orphans’ court is a probate court. Orphans’ court judges are elected to serve four-year terms. Each county, other than Harford and Montgomery counties, has

three judges sitting on its orphans' court. In Harford and Montgomery counties, circuit court judges preside in orphans' court. The chief judge of each county is appointed by the Governor. An orphans' court may establish that a will is valid, administer an estate, and direct the conduct of an executor of an estate.

The last time salaries for the Howard County Orphans' Court judges were increased was 1999. At that time the salary for each associate judge was raised from \$5,800 annually to \$6,380 annually, and the salary for the chief judge was raised from \$6,728 annually to \$7,400 annually.

The salaries for orphans' court judges vary greatly across the State. The current salaries are listed by county below:

- Allegany County -- annual salary set by the county commissioners;
- Anne Arundel County -- \$19,000 annually, with an additional \$500 for the chief judge;
- Baltimore City -- \$50,000 annually for associate judges, \$60,000 annually for the chief judge;
- Baltimore County -- \$30,000 annually for associate judges, \$32,000 annually for the chief judge;
- Calvert County -- \$5,000 annually for associate judges, \$5,200 annually for the chief judge;
- Caroline County -- \$4,500 annually for each judge;
- Carroll County -- \$10,000 annually for each judge;
- Cecil County -- \$ 4,500 annually for each judge;
- Charles County -- through 2002, \$6,365 annually for each judge; beginning 2003, \$7,000 annually;
- Dorchester County -- \$3,500 annually for each judge;
- Frederick County -- \$6,000 annually for associate judges, \$6,500 annually for the chief judge;
- Garrett County -- annual salary set by the county commissioners;
- Howard County -- \$6,380 annually for associate judges, \$7,400 annually for the chief judge;
- Kent County -- \$3,600 annually for each judge;
- Prince George's County -- through the current term of office, \$31,500 annually for associate judges, \$32,000 annually for the chief judge; beginning at the start of the next term of office, \$36,500 annually for associate judges, \$37,000 annually for the chief judge;

- Queen Anne's County -- annual salary set by the county commissioners;
- St. Mary's County -- \$3,000 annually for each judge;
- Somerset County -- \$34 a day for each day spent attending court sessions;
- Talbot County -- annual salary set by the county council;
- Washington County -- \$6,000 annually for each judge;
- Wicomico County -- \$3,200 annually for each judge; and
- Worcester County -- set by county commissioners, but not less than \$30 a day for each day spent attending court sessions.

In addition, many of the orphans' court judges also receive allowances for travel and other expenses.

---

### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Howard County, Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 18, 2002  
lc/cer

---

Analysis by: Anne E. Gawthrop

Direct Inquiries to:  
John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510