

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2002 Session

FISCAL NOTE  
Revised

Senate Bill 568

(Senator Collins)

Judicial Proceedings

Judiciary

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**Baltimore County - Orphans' Court Judges - Salary Increase**

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This bill increases the annual salary of Baltimore County Orphans' Court associate judges from \$30,000 annually to \$39,000 annually. The bill also reduces the difference in salary between the chief judge of the Baltimore County Orphans' Court and the associate judges on the court from \$2,000 to \$500, providing the chief judge with an increased annual salary of \$39,500.

The salary increases take effect July 1, 2003.

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**Fiscal Summary**

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

**Local Effect:** Expenditures by Baltimore County would increase by an estimated \$26,000 (including fringe benefits) beginning in FY 2004.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** The associate judges for the Baltimore County Orphans' Court currently earn \$30,000 annually, while the chief judge earns \$32,000 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 Baltimore County Orphans' Court judges were increased was 1997. At that time the salary for each associate judge was raised from \$27,000 annually to \$30,000 annually and the salary for the chief judge was raised from \$29,000 annually to \$32,000 annually.

The salaries for orphans' court judges vary greatly across the State. The current salaries as set forth in statute are listed 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 -- \$7,400 annually for each 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
- 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.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 12, 2002  
lsc/cer Revised - Senate Third Reader - March 22, 2002

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