

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2005 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Revised**

Senate Bill 484

(Senator Stone)

Judicial Proceedings

Judiciary

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**Orphans' Court for Baltimore County - Judges - Salary Increases**

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This bill increases the annual salary of a Baltimore County Orphans' Court associate judge from \$39,000 to \$45,000, over a period of four years in \$1,500 increments. The bill also increases the difference in salary between the chief judge of the Baltimore County Orphans' Court and the associate judges on the court from \$500 to \$1,000, providing the chief judge with an increased annual salary of \$46,000 over the same four-year period.

The salary increases take effect July 1, 2007.

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**Fiscal Summary**

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

**Local Effect:** Baltimore County salary expenditures would increase by \$5,000 (excluding fringe benefits) beginning in FY 2008.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** The two associate judges for the Baltimore County Orphans' Court currently earn \$39,000 annually and the chief judge earns \$39,500. Compensation and allowances for an orphans' court judge are set by statute and vary greatly across the State. The current salaries are listed by county below:

- Allegany County – salary set by the county commissioners;
- Anne Arundel County – \$19,000, with an additional \$500 for the chief judge;
- Baltimore City – \$55,000 for associate judges, \$65,000 for the chief judge;
- Baltimore County – \$39,000 for associate judges, \$39,500 for the chief judge;
- Calvert County – \$7,750 for associate judges, \$7,950 for the chief judge;
- Caroline County – \$4,500 for each judge;
- Carroll County – \$10,000 for each judge;
- Cecil County – \$ 5,500 for each judge;
- Charles County – \$7,000 for each judge;
- Dorchester County – \$3,500 for each judge;
- Frederick County – \$6,000 for associate judges, \$6,500 for the chief judge;
- Garrett County – salary set by the county commissioners;
- Howard County – \$8,000 for associate judges, \$9,500 for the chief judge;
- Kent County – \$4,000 for each judge;
- Prince George’s County – \$36,500 for associate judges, \$37,000 for the chief judge;
- Queen Anne’s County – salary set by the county commissioners;
- St. Mary’s County – \$4,000 for each judge;
- Somerset County – \$1,700 for associate judges, \$1,900 for the chief judge;
- Talbot County – salary set by the county council;
- Washington County – \$7,000 for each judge;
- Wicomico County – \$3,200 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.

**Background:** An orphans’ court is a probate court. Orphans’ court judges are elected to serve four-year terms during the statewide election. 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 2002 (Chapter 175). At that time the salary for each associate judge was raised from \$30,000 to \$39,000 annually and the salary for the chief judge was raised from \$32,000 to \$39,500 annually.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** Annual salary expenditures would increase by \$1,500 each for the two Baltimore County Orphans' Court associate judges and by \$2,000 for the chief judge, for a total of \$5,000 (excluding fringe benefits) in fiscal 2008 and by \$1,500 for each judge, or a total of \$4,500 in future years. Baltimore County did not respond to a request for information about this bill.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Register of Wills, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 15, 2005  
mp/jr Revised - Senate Third Reader - March 28, 2005

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