

Chapter 565

(House Bill 822)

AN ACT concerning

Circuit Court Clerks and Registers of Wills – Maximum Salary

FOR the purpose of altering the maximum annual salary of the clerks of the circuit courts and the registers of wills; repealing as obsolete a certain minimum annual salary for the register of wills for Baltimore City; and generally relating to the salaries of the clerks of the circuit courts and the registers of wills.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings
Section 2–504
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2020 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Estates and Trusts
Section 2–205
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings

2–504.

(a) **(1)** The clerk of each circuit court shall receive an annual salary of not more than [\$146,500 as set by the Board of Public Works on the basis of the relative volume of business and receipts in the clerk’s office] **THE SALARY OF A STATE EMPLOYEE AT GRADE 26, STEP 20 OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND STANDARD AND BARGAINING SALARY SCALE IN EFFECT ON THE DAY BEFORE THE DAY THAT THE CLERK BEGINS A NEW TERM OF OFFICE.**

(2) ANY CHANGE IN THE SALARY PAID UNDER THE STATE OF MARYLAND STANDARD AND BARGAINING SALARY SCALE DURING THE TERM OF OFFICE OF A CLERK MAY NOT APPLY TO THE INCUMBENT CLERK, BUT THE CHANGED RATE SHALL TAKE EFFECT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT FOLLOWING TERM OF OFFICE.

(3) THE SALARY OF THE CLERK OF EACH CIRCUIT COURT SHALL BE SET BY THE BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS ON THE BASIS OF THE RELATIVE VOLUME OF BUSINESS AND RECEIPTS IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE.

(b) A clerk shall devote his full working time to the duties of the clerk's office and is entitled to the salary prescribed in subsection (a) of this section.

(c) The salary of a clerk is payable biweekly.

Article – Estates and Trusts

2–205.

(a) (1) It is the intent of this section that each register shall receive a fair and adequate compensation for the effort and duties required of the register by the register's office.

(2) The volume and character of work done by the register shall be in comparison to the salary fixed by the Board of Public Works for each of the other registers.

(b) (1) Each register is entitled to receive an annual salary of not more than [\$146,500, to be determined in each instance by the Board of Public Works] **THE SALARY OF A STATE EMPLOYEE AT GRADE 26, STEP 20 OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND STANDARD AND BARGAINING SALARY SCALE IN EFFECT ON THE DAY BEFORE THE DAY THAT THE REGISTER BEGINS A NEW TERM OF OFFICE.**

(2) ANY CHANGE IN THE SALARY PAID UNDER THE STATE OF MARYLAND STANDARD AND BARGAINING SALARY SCALE DURING THE TERM OF OFFICE OF A REGISTER MAY NOT APPLY TO THE INCUMBENT REGISTER, BUT THE CHANGED RATE SHALL TAKE EFFECT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT FOLLOWING TERM OF OFFICE.

(3) THE SALARY OF EACH REGISTER SHALL BE DETERMINED BY THE BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS.

~~[(2)]~~ (4) In determining the annual salary of the register, the Board of Public Works shall be guided in the exercise of its discretion by:

(i) The population of the county determined by the last official United States census;

(ii) The dollar volume of total fees and taxes collected and excess fees turned over to the State for each of the preceding 5 years by the office of the register for which the salary is being fixed; and

(iii) Other pertinent data which have relation to the reasonableness of the salary in relation to the work done and volume handled by the office.

(c) [The minimum annual salary for the register in Baltimore City is \$12,000.

(d)] (1) The salaries of the registers shall be paid semimonthly from the fees and receipts of the office, after deducting the expenses of the office.

(2) Expenses include salaries of deputies and clerks, books, stationery, office supplies, and other necessary and customary expenses of doing business.

[(e)] (D) (1) (i) If the fees and receipts of the office are insufficient in any fiscal year to pay all or a part of the expenses of the office and authorized salary of a register, the deficiency shall be funded from the taxes remitted to the Comptroller by the register during that fiscal year.

(ii) Written authority for the transfer of funds shall be first obtained from the Comptroller.

(2) In the event that tax collections for the fiscal year are insufficient, the Comptroller shall make up the deficit from excess fees remitted from all other registers.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, in accordance with Article III, § 35 of the Maryland Constitution, this Act may not be construed to extend or apply to the salary or compensation of a clerk of a circuit court or a register of wills while serving in a term of office beginning before the effective date of this Act, but the provisions of this Act concerning the salary or compensation of a clerk of the circuit court or a register of wills shall take effect at the beginning of the next following term of office. This limitation does not apply to an individual appointed or elected after the effective date of this Act to fill out an unexpired term.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2026.

Approved by the Governor, May 12, 2026.