

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 946
Judiciary

(Delegate Wu)

State Government - Governor's Appointments Office - Judicial Selection -
Reporting

This bill requires – by December 1, 2026, and annually thereafter – the Appointments Office in the Office of the Governor to report to the General Assembly and make publicly available a report for the prior calendar year on the number of individuals who (1) apply to a judicial nominating commission seeking appointment as a judge; (2) are recommended by a judicial nominating commission to the office for appointment as a judge; and (3) are nominated by the Governor to serve as a judge. The information is to be disaggregated by judicial office, ethnicity, gender identity, disability status, veteran status, and sexual orientation. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The Governor’s Office can implement the bill’s requirements with existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Judges within the State are appointed and retained through a hybrid process. At all four court levels (the Supreme Court of Maryland, the Appellate Court of Maryland, circuit courts, and the District Court), the Governor appoints a qualified member of the Maryland Bar in the case of a vacancy (or the creation of a new judgeship). To assist in the selection process for judges at all levels, numerous governors since 1970 have issued

executive orders creating judicial nominating commissions to recommend candidates for appointment. The nominating commissions review applications from interested attorneys, interview candidates, and consider recommendations from citizens and various bar associations. The commissions must submit to the Governor a list of candidates who are deemed to be legally and professionally most fully qualified for judicial office, and the Governor generally makes the appointment from the list.

Under applicable definitions within § 1-101 of the Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article, a “judge” is a judge of the Supreme Court of Maryland, the Appellate Court of Maryland, a circuit court for a county, or the District Court, but not a judge of the orphans’ court or the Maryland Tax Court.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Governor's Office; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 1, 2026
caw/jkb

Analysis by: Joanne E. Tetlow

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510