

SB74 Clerks Compensation Increase Testimony Mahas

Uploaded by: Mahasin El Amin

Position: FAV

SB0074 Section 2-504 Courts and Judicial Proceedings
Judicial Proceedings Committee – January 26, 2022
Sponsor: Senator Jackson
Position: Support

Testimony of Mahasin El Amin, Clerk of the Circuit Court for Prince George's County

Thank you, Chairman Smith and members of the committee for this opportunity to testify in support of SB74. I would also like to thank Senator Jackson for sponsoring this Bill.

For the record, my name is Mahasin El Amin, Clerk of the Circuit Court for Prince George's County. My testimony today is on behalf of the Maryland Circuit Court Clerks' Association, which represents the 24 elected Clerks of the Circuit Court in Maryland.

Our Clerk's Association is seeking an increase in the salary cap for the elected Clerks of the Circuit Courts. As you are probably aware, the legislature adjusts the maximum salary cap, but the actual salaries are set by the Board of Public Works. Today we are asking for legislation to raise the salary cap from \$124,500 to a total of \$146,500 so that the top salary that may be earned by a Clerk is comparable with the salaries for other similar positions. Once again, the actual salary would be set by the Board of Public Works.

Not all clerks receive the highest salary. The actual salary set by the Board of Public Works is based on the size of each jurisdiction, which are identified as Large, Medium-Large, Medium and Small. Currently there are five (5) large jurisdictions, which are Baltimore City, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties. There are six (6) Medium-Large jurisdictions, which are Carroll, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, and Washington Counties. There are six (6) Medium Jurisdictions and they are Allegany, Calvert, Cecil, St. Mary's, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties. Finally, there are seven (7) Small

Jurisdictions and they are Caroline, Dorchester, Garrett, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, and Talbot Counties.

By law, the Clerks cannot receive cost-of-living raises or other interim pay adjustments. Our salary is only set every four years in accordance with Maryland Constitution, Article 2, Section 35, which requires that our salary may not be changed during each term of office.

The Clerk's request to increase the salary cap is supported by Chief Judge Getty and Pamela Harris, the State Court Administrator. It should be noted that this request is included in the Judiciary's budget.

My colleagues will discuss the comparable salaries for other similar positions and the services that the Clerks perform for the citizens of Maryland.

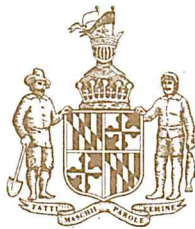
Our Association hopes you will look favorably on SB 74. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

JacksonSB74Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Jackson

Position: FAV

MICHAEL A. JACKSON
Legislative District 27
Calvert, Charles and
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Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Pensions

Public Safety, Transportation, and
Environment

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

District Office
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Prince Frederick, Maryland 20678

TESTIMONY - SENATE BILL 74
CIRCUIT COURT CLERKS – SALARY INCREASE
JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE
JANUARY 26, 2022

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Committee Members:

Senate Bill 74 is a very straightforward bill that provides the enabling authority to raise the salaries of local Circuit Court Clerks. Presently the maximum salary that Clerks can receive is \$124,500. This legislation would raise that maximum salary to \$146,500.

Throughout Maryland, Circuit Court Clerks provide valuable services that include recording filings and issuing court documents for approximately 200,000 new cases every day. They are also tasked with recording 700,000 land records, issuing 50,000 business licenses, and processing 30,000 marriage licenses each year.

The salaries of Maryland Clerks of the Court have fallen behind both their local counterparts and fellow officers of the Court. This legislation simply brings their salaries better in line with those who hold similar positions.

For the reasons listed above, I ask for a favorable report of Senate Bill 74.

Testimony Clerk Salary Cap Dalton.pdf

Uploaded by: Sandra Dalton

Position: FAV

SB0074 Circuit Court Clerks – Salary Increase

Judicial Proceedings Committee – January 26, 2022

Sponsor: Senator Jackson

Position: Support

Testimony of Sandra Dalton, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Frederick County

Thank you, Chairman Smith and members of the committee for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 74. For the record, my name is Sandra Dalton, Clerk of the Circuit Court for Frederick County. My testimony today is on behalf of the Maryland Circuit Court Clerks' Association, which represents the elected Clerks of the Circuit Court in Maryland.

As my colleague stated, we are requesting that the legislature raise the salary cap for the elected Clerks of the Circuit Court. I would just like to summarize the many services the elected Clerks of the Circuit Court perform for the citizens of Maryland.

The Circuit Court Clerks perform all the duties of clerks in other courts. This includes recording filings and issuing court documents for approximately 200,000 new cases every year.

The Circuit Court Clerks also perform additional duties that other court clerks do not. This includes recording 700,000 land records, issuing 50,000 business licenses; and issuing 30,000 marriage licenses every year.

The Circuit Court Clerks collect almost \$400 million in fees to fund State, County and Local governments every year.

The Circuit Court Clerks employ 1,477 positions, well over 1/3 of all positions in the Judiciary. The largest Clerk's Office has over 300 employees.

The Clerks kept their offices running throughout the COVID pandemic, ensuring that all functions continued to be performed even while other offices were shut down. This included

recording deeds/land records necessary to keep the real estate industry running, as well as issuing marriage licenses and business licenses.

The Clerks are often behind the scenes, but we serve an important role in people's lives, whether it is keeping the courts running, helping new businesses get licensed, assisting couples getting married, or making it possible for people to buy and sell their houses.

We hope you will look favorably on SB 74. And we would like to thank Senator Jackson for sponsoring this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

sb74.pdf

Uploaded by: Sara Elalamy

Position: FAV

MARYLAND JUDICIAL CONFERENCE
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Hon. Joseph M. Getty
Chief Judge

187 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis, MD 21401

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Legislative Committee
Sara Elalamy
410-260-1561
RE: Senate Bill 74
Circuit Court Clerks - Salary Increase
DATE: January 7, 2022
(1/26)
POSITION: Support

The Maryland Judiciary supports Senate Bill 74. The legislation would increase the limit on the maximum salary that the Board of Public Works may set for a Clerk of the Circuit Court from \$124,500 to \$146,500.

By statute and comparable to other elected state officials, Clerk of the Circuit Court salaries may only increase every four years.

The Clerk of the Circuit Court is a locally elected state official who occupies an integral position within the judicial branch of government. Collectively, the 24 Clerks of the Circuit Courts are responsible for processing in excess of 200,000 court filings that generally flow through their offices each year, as well as issuing thousands of business licenses each year. They are also responsible for recording and maintaining nearly a million land record instruments and plats yearly, as well as recording liens and judgments, state and federal tax liens, civil judgments, and judgments also issued by the United States District Court. The clerks furthermore issue marriage licenses, perform marriage ceremonies, administer the oaths of office to elected and appointed local officials, issue notary public commissions, and process passport applications.

Compared to similar positions in surrounding states, Circuit Court Clerk of Court salaries have fallen behind. For example, the maximum salary for Clerks of the Superior Court in Virginia is \$150,273. The maximum salary increase proposed in SB 74 would make compensation for Maryland Clerks of Court comparable to Virginia Clerks of Court where a tiered salary structure also exists.

The Clerks of Court are essential to the efficient and effective operation of the circuit courts and, therefore, the criminal and civil justice systems in Maryland. As is evident, clerk offices are responsible for an overwhelming volume of cases and the collection of

significant funds both for the state and local jurisdictions, as well as the critical function of accurately recording the transfer of land instruments. The requested salary increase is reasonable, justifiable, and deserved. The Judiciary urges a favorable report.

cc. Hon. Michael Jackson
Judicial Council
Legislative Committee
Kelley O'Connor

Testimony Clerk Salary Cap Poyer.pdf

Uploaded by: Scott Poyer

Position: FAV

SB0074 Circuit Court Clerks – Salary Increase

Judicial Proceedings Committee – January 26, 2022

Sponsor: Senator Jackson

Position: Support

Testimony of Scott Poyer, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Anne Arundel County

Thank you, Chairman Smith and members of the committee for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 74. For the record, my name is Scott Poyer, Clerk of the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County. My testimony today is on behalf of the Maryland Circuit Court Clerks' Association, which represents the elected Clerks of the Circuit Court in Maryland.

As my colleague stated, we are requesting the legislature to raise the salary cap for the elected Clerks of the Circuit Court to \$146,500 so that the top salary that may be earned by a Clerk is comparable with the salaries for other similar positions.

Since the last time when the Clerk's salary cap was increased in 2018, the salary for the Clerks has fallen behind that of other Judiciary employees, and officials in the region who perform similar duties.

Since 2018, other Maryland Judiciary employees have received a 16.5% increase in their salaries, along with cash bonuses which the elected clerks are not eligible to receive. Circuit Court Clerks now make less than Court Administrators who work in the same courthouse, averaging approximately \$144,000 in the large jurisdictions. Clerks make less than Judiciary Assistant Administrators, averaging approximately \$146,000. In fact, even though the elected clerks are considered some of the most senior positions in the Judiciary, there are now over 30 judiciary job classifications with higher top salaries than that of the lowest paid Clerks.

Circuit Court Clerks also earn less than similar officials in our region. The District of Columbia Superior Court Clerk of Court has an annual salary over \$183,000. The salary for Clerks of Circuit Courts in Virginia is over \$150,000, the Clerk of the United States Federal District Court of Maryland earns over \$132,000, and Pennsylvania Prothonotaries earn almost \$137,000.

The Circuit Court Clerks are not asking for our salary cap to be set at the highest level in the region at \$183,000. We are asking for a cap which is approximately the midpoint of the salaries already being earned by officials in similar positions.

My colleague will comment on the many services that the Circuit Court Clerks provide for the citizens of Maryland.

Our Association hopes you will look favorably on SB 74. And we would like to thank Senator Jackson for sponsoring this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.