

HB0519 Circuit Court Clerks – Salary Increase
Judiciary Committee – March 2, 2022
Sponsors: Delegates Williams and Crutchfield
Position: Favorable

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

Thank you, Chairman Clippinger and members of the committee for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 519. 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.

Our Association asks the committee for a favorable report on HB 519. And we would like to thank Delegates Williams and Crutchfield for sponsoring this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and I am available to answer any questions you may have.