



House Bill 327

Elections - Election Judges - Minimum Compensation

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Ways and Means Committee

Date: February 8, 2022

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 327 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill would require local boards of elections to compensate each election judge at least \$200 per day for each day of service on election day and during each early voting period.

This bill would place a substantial cost burden onto local boards of elections, whose functions are supported by county funding. Without state resources to offset these potentially large costs, the bill represents an unfunded mandate on local governments.

HB 327 would mandate a new floor for election judge compensation. **MACo does not raise policy objections with this goal – county concerns are merely practical and cost-driven.**

As a rule, MACo resists policies that trigger costly or burdensome local implementation. If raising the floor for election judge compensation is a top priority for state policymakers, legislation should provide the needed funding to offset the resulting staff and operations costs for local boards of elections and their administration.

This bill would place a costly mandate on county governments to carry out new state policy. Under current law, counties have no choice but to fund these costs – competing for limited local funds against public health, schools, public safety, roadway maintenance, and other essential public services.

As such, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on HB 327, with amendments necessary to avoid a substantial unfunded mandate on local governments. MACo would be pleased to join local election administrators in working with the Committee to develop bill language that accomplishes this goal.