SB0204   State Retirement and Pension System - Vesting and Retirement Allowance - Clerk of the Court and Register of Wills
Budget and Taxation Committee – February 2, 2023
Sponsor: Senator Michael Jackson
Position: Favorable

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

Thank you, Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chairman Rosapepe, and members of the committee, for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 204. For the record, my name is Mahasin El Amin, Clerk of the Circuit Court for Prince George's County.

The Clerks of the Circuit Court support SB 204, which would allow for the elected Clerks of the Circuit Court and the Register of Wills to vest in the State Retirement and Pension System with 8 years of eligible service instead of 10 years.

The current vesting requirement of 10 years, which is the same as for unelected state employees, means that a Clerk or Register must serve 2 ½ terms if they do not have prior years of eligible service. The Clerks believe that changing the vesting requirements to 8 years, which equates to 2 terms, would be more consistent with the vesting requirements of other state elected officers:

- o Judges vest with at least 5 years of eligibility service § 29-301

- o Heads of units of state government immediately vest upon taking office § 29-304

- o Constitutional officers immediately vest upon taking office § 29-305

- o Members of the General Assembly vest after 8 years in office

Clerks and Registers are elected officials who are subject to the same demands of public office as other elected officials, and our tenure is not as secure as unelected state employees

but is subject to the same regular elections decisions as other elected officials. That is why we believe our retirement vesting requirements should be similar to other elected officials as well.

The Circuit Court Clerks hope you will give a favorable report on SB 204, and we would like to thank Senator Jackson for sponsoring this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and I am available if you have any questions.