



Maryland Association of Election Officials

Representing the Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland

March 14, 2023

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Maryland House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

SB925: Favorable

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee Members:

My name is Katherine Berry, the Election Director in Carroll County, and the chair of the Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) Legislative Committee. I am writing on behalf of MAEO to provide you with testimony and support of SB925 – Elections - Election Judges - Minimum Compensation.

The Local Boards of Election are currently facing a crisis in staffing the polling places on Election Day. Historically, our judges tend to be retired individuals who have a strong desire to support their community, and are not driven by monetary compensation. However, in recent years, we have had to get creative in our recruitment efforts. This has included utilizing the page program and youth engagement, as well as taking advantage of administrative leave that the State and some county governments provide to government employees. Due to the pandemic and the hyperpartisanship surrounding election integrity, the task of recruiting, hiring, and training election judges has become increasingly difficult and now seem to be more driven by compensation.

We need stronger incentives that reflect not only our urgent need, but also our appreciation for the time and effort that our volunteer judges contribute without exploiting their patriotism. We have seen an increase in the amount of training required for election judges due to new legislation that passes and new voting equipment, so offering a baseline compensation of at least \$250 per day worked and \$50 for completing the training programs would help us with recruitment efforts.

At MAEO, we are committed to performing our jobs with efficiency, effectiveness, and absolute accuracy in the election results. We hope that you will consider SB925 to ensure fair compensation for our Election Judges and we would like to thank Senator Washington for his attentiveness to this important issue.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions, please contact me at (410)386-2958 or Katherine.berry@maryland.gov.