



Maryland Association of Election Officials

Representing the Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland

February 28, 2023

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
Maryland House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

HB1200 – Support

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins 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 HB1200 – Elections - Election Judges - Minimum Compensation.

The Local Boards of Election are currently facing a crisis 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 typically driven by monetary compensation. However, in recent years, we have experienced calls from the Election Judges for more compensation that is commensurate with their job duties. The modern Election Judges must manage more technology and processes than ever before, including setting up a VPN at polling places or conducting the Same Day Registration Process.

Election Officials have had to be creative in to recruit Election Judges, including utilizing the page program and encouraging 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. As the last resort, we must consider increasing the pay for the Election Judges in order to ensure that polling places are able to open on time and provide a convenient and fair voting experience.

We need stronger incentives that reflect not only our urgent need, but also our appreciation for the time and effort that our Election Judges contribute to making the process work. 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 HB1200 to ensure fair compensation for our Election Judges and we would like to thank Delegate Jones for her 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.