

DANA JONES
Legislative District 30A
Anne Arundel County

Ways and Means Committee

Secretary, Women's Caucus

Vice Chair, Anne Arundel
County Delegation



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 161
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3211 · 301-858-3211
800-492-7122 Ext. 3211
Dana.Jones@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Delegate Dana Jones
Before the Ways and Means Committee**

**In Support of HB 1200
Elections - Election Judges - Minimum Compensation
February 28, 2023, 1pm**

Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Wilkins, and fellow members of the Ways and Means Committee,

For the record - I am Delegate Dana Jones.

I come before you today to re-introduce a bill that would ensure election workers are fairly compensated for their essential work.

Currently, local boards of election are not required to pay election workers minimum wage.

In many counties, the qualifications to be a judge specifically state that they should be "Physically and mentally able to work at least a 15-hour day."

If judges did work a 15 hour day, they would only be making \$13/hour in Montgomery County, \$11.5/hour in Anne Arundel, and just \$10/hr in Frederick.

For example, in Anne Arundel County, all election judges are compensated between \$175.00 and \$250.00, depending on position, for their services. In Montgomery County, election judges are paid \$200 and in Frederick County, they are paid \$150.

With these long hours and, frankly, shamefully low wages, it is no wonder that many local boards of elections face difficulty trying to recruit election workers.

In the previous election cycle, it was widely known and reported that counties were facing significant struggles recruiting election judges. Just weeks before the 2022 Gubernatorial election, Baltimore City was short more than 1,000 judges. And my home County of Anne Arundel was short 300.

Maryland is on pace to reach a \$15/hour minimum wage by 2025, and Governor Moore has filed the Fair Wage Act to accelerate that plan to October 1st, 2023. Considering the significant responsibility and importance of our State's election judges, we must do better to incentivize and retain them. Ensuring that Marylanders are paid a minimum wage is the very least we should do for those who facilitate the very foundation of our democracy.

Our state's policies are a reflection of our values. If we continue to pay our essential election workers less than we pay any other employee in our economy, what does that say about the importance we place on those who administer our most treasured democratic right?

I respectfully urge a favorable report on this bill.



Delegate Dana Jones