

HB0300 Family Law - Marriage Ceremony - Designation of Deputy Clerk
Judiciary Committee – February 1, 2024
Sponsor: Delegate Karen Toles
Position: Favorable

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

Thank you, Chairman Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the committee, for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 300. 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 HB 300, transferring the authority to designate a deputy clerk to perform a marriage ceremony, from the county administrative judge of the circuit court to the clerk of the circuit court in each county.

Currently, Judges, Clerks of the Circuit Court, and Deputy Clerks of the Circuit Court are authorized to perform civil marriage ceremonies in the State under the authority granted in section 2-406 of the Family Law Article. Judges and Clerks have direct authority to perform civil marriage ceremonies, but Deputy Clerks must be designated by the Administrative Judge in each county. This means that even though Clerks have direct authority to perform marriage ceremonies, we must request and receive approval from our local Administrative Judge any time we would like to assign one of our staff to assist us in performing marriage ceremonies in the courthouse.

In Prince George’s County, my manager sends me a request to make a change in the designation of who can perform marriage ceremonies. I in turn, send a request to the administrative judge requesting that an administrative order be passed identifying the names of the employees who I would like designated. Then the administrative judge must draft an and issue an order. In a large jurisdiction such as Prince George’s County, this process is inefficient

considering our turnover and business needs. Additionally, the Clerks believe this requirement to be an unnecessary bureaucratic step and an infringement of the authority of the elected Clerk to direct the work of our own staff.

I do want to note that this change would only impact the process of how deputy clerks are designated to perform ceremonies. It has no impact on those who are ordained.

Therefore, the Circuit Court Clerks hope you will give a favorable report on HB300, and we would like to thank Delegate Toles for sponsoring and all the co-sponsors of this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and I am available if you have any questions.