



Maryland Association of Election Officials

Representing the Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland

February 13, 2024

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

HB700 - Information

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Committee Members,

My name is John Michael Gudger, Chair of the Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) Legislative Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to provide informational testimony on HB700. This bill proposes substantial reforms aimed at improving the recruitment and management of election judges, which are pivotal for the successful execution of elections in Maryland.

Youth Engagement

The bill's provision enabling public school students to both earn service-learning hours and receive compensation for serving as election judges is particularly commendable. By offering such incentives, we encourage youth participation in our democratic processes, fostering a deeper sense of civic responsibility and understanding of the electoral process among young Marylanders. We support the notion that service can be compensated, and this dual benefit not only rightly rewards our young citizens for their contributions but also introduces them to the significance of civic engagement.

Needed Definitions

We also appreciate the bill's effort to clearly define "returning election judge." This definition, identifying a returning election judge as someone who has served in the immediately preceding statewide election, provides necessary clarity to the provisions related to bonus payments for returning election judges introduced in 2023's HB1200 / CH0157.

Standardization of Election Judge Paperwork

House Bill 700 seeks to make uniform the paperwork for election judges, which currently differs from county to county. The legislation requires the State Board of Elections to establish regulations that standardize and minimize the forms or documentation needed for election judges. While MAEO recognizes the benefits of this approach towards simplification and standardization, it's important to highlight that realizing this goal will require a concerted effort among the State Board of Elections, local boards, and county governments. Given the variety in current practices, achieving standardization will demand thoughtful consideration of the distinct needs and operational realities of local jurisdictions.

MAEO thanks the committee for considering our informational testimony and stands ready to assist in any way we can to enhance the recruitment, retention, and efficient management of election judges in our state.

Sincerely,

John Michael Gudger
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Chair, MAEO Legislative Committee