



The Circuit Court for Queen Anne's County

Katherine B. Hager
Clerk of Court

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Douglas Arnold, Chief Deputy Clerk

House Bill 0975: FAVORABLE

Written Testimony of Katherine Hager, Elected Clerk of the Circuit Court for Queen Anne's County

Chairman Clippinger, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my written testimony in support of House Bill 975. I have worked for the Clerk's office of the Circuit Court for Queen Anne's County for 19 years and have had the privilege of serving as the elected Clerk of Court since 2018.

When I started working in Queen Anne's County in 2006, leadership at the Administrative Office of the Courts informed us that one reason Queen Anne's County would never receive a second judge was due to the lack of space in our historic courthouse. At that time the former Administrative Judge, and the Honorable Scott MacGlashan, the former Clerk of Court, worked together to address this challenge by creating the "New Courthouse Committee." This committee, which I was a member of, included members of the local Bar and community stakeholders. The committee was tasked with exploring the county's courthouse needs, as it was 19 years ago, that the need for a second judge was already being felt in Queen Anne's County.

In response to the security assessments and the needs of the court, Queen Anne's County made a significant financial investment in the future of the court system by approving the construction of a new courthouse that would accommodate 2 judges, 2 jury trial courtrooms and 2 hearing rooms. The process from land acquisition to the completion of the new courthouse spanned ten years and three different sets of County Commissioners, highlighting the county's commitment to addressing the need for a second judge and improving the court system.

While the addition of a judge is critical, it is important to note that this request does not include a request for additional staff for the Clerk's office. Usually with a new Judgeship, the Clerk's office receives an additional PIN of a courtroom clerk. My current staffing levels are adequate to meet the needs of a second judge.

I want to thank Delegates Arentz, Jacobs and Ghrist for sponsoring this bill and respectfully ask for your favorable support of this bill. Thank you.