

**HB0560 Criminal Law – Fraud – Possession of Residential Real Property**  
**Judiciary Committee – February 11, 2025**  
**Sponsor: Delegate Marvin Holmes**  
**Position: Favorable with Amendments**

**Testimony of Dawne Lindsey, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Allegany County**

Thank you, Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the committee, for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 560. For the record, my name is Dawn Lindsey, Clerk of the Circuit Court for Allegany County. I am also here on behalf of the Maryland Circuit Court Clerks Association, which represents the 24 elected Clerks of the Circuit Court in Maryland.

The Clerks support HB 560 because it addresses criminal laws against fraud involving real property. The Clerks of the Circuit Court are responsible for recording all land records transactions in Maryland, and we have seen a concerning increase in incidences of property fraud. It is a statewide as well as a national problem. That is why we support efforts like HB 560 to help address the problem.

The Clerks would like to offer just one friendly amendment to the bill for consideration. Currently the bill specifies that it only affects residential real property. While that is a step in the right direction, the clerks have seen instances of fraud involving all forms of real property, not just residential properties. This includes the most recent case in Worcester County that involved a vacant lot. That is why we recommend amending the bill to delete the word “residential” so that all forms of real property are covered by the bill.

We ask for a favorable report, with amendments for this bill and I am available to answer any questions you may have.