



House Bill 586

Election Law - Election Judges - Compensation

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Ways and Means Committee

Date: February 11, 2025

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 586, which ensures election judges receive training compensation only if they serve on Election Day or during early voting. The bill also expands opportunities for student participation by allowing public school students to earn service-learning credit while receiving election judge pay, removing an unnecessary restriction that limits recruitment.

Counties rely on qualified election judges to staff polling places and ensure smooth election administration. Current law requires counties to pay election judges for completing training, even if they fail to serve. As such, local boards expend limited public funds on individuals who do not fulfill their role, creating staffing shortages and unnecessary costs. This bill remedies this issue by ensuring election judges complete at least one day of service before receiving training pay, which promotes accountability and improves election workforce reliability.

This bill also supports student recruitment efforts. Maryland law requires students to complete service-learning hours to graduate, but current rules force them to choose between earning credit and receiving election judge pay. This outdated restriction discourages students from serving and limits a critical pipeline for future election workers. HB 586 eliminates this barrier, allowing more students to gain hands-on civic experience while satisfying academic requirements.

HB 586 provides a commonsense solution that supports efficient election operations, reduces wasteful spending, promotes civic engagement, and enhances recruitment efforts. For these reasons, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 586.