



Maryland Association of Election Officials

The Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland

February 18, 2026

Delegate Melissa Wells, Chair
Maryland House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

HB 662 - Support

Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) is the professional membership organization representing local election officials and Election Boards across all 24 jurisdictions in Maryland. Our members are committed to ensuring the smooth and effective administration of elections and to making Maryland elections accessible, secure, and fair.

MAEO supports HB 662. This legislation removes the "either/or" choice currently facing our student election judges, allowing the opportunity to simultaneously earn required service-learning hours and receive the required standard daily compensation for their labor.

Recruiting a sufficient number of election judges is the single greatest operational challenge for Local Boards of Elections (LBEs). By allowing students to receive both credit and pay, this bill provides a powerful incentive that will expand our recruitment pool. More importantly, engaging students early in their civic lives creates a "pipeline" of lifelong election workers. If we can bring them into a voting location while they are still in high school, we instill a long-term commitment to the democratic process that carries into adulthood.

HB 662 shifts the narrative of student service from "charity" to professional civic responsibility. Serving as an election judge is rigorous, technical work that requires completing mandatory courses of instruction and working long hours on election day. Our students should be taught that their time and technical skills are valuable.

Furthermore, this bill represents a critical step toward equity in our elections by removing the financial barriers that currently limit student participation. For many Maryland students, particularly those from lower-income households, training, transportation and spending 15 or more hours at a polling place for "free" is simply not a viable option. By ensuring students can receive both the mandated service-learning hours and the daily compensation, which currently is at least \$250 for new judges, we ensure that students from all socioeconomic backgrounds, not just those with the financial cushion to volunteer their time, can participate in the administration of our democracy.

MAEO is committed to ensuring fair, efficient, and accessible elections. We believe this small change offers a path to recruit the election judges of the future.

We respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 662.