

JON S. CARDIN
Legislative District 11
Baltimore County

Judiciary Committee

Chair
Civil Law and Procedure
Subcommittee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 217
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3054 · 301-858-3054
800-492-7122 Ext. 3054
Fax: 410-841-3385 · 301-858-3385
Jon.Cardin@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

House Bill 638
Judges - Mandatory Retirement Age
Support

HB638 reflects the need for Maryland's Constitution to evolve alongside the society it serves. When the judicial retirement age was established in 1851, life expectancy was significantly lower than it is today. Marylanders are now living longer, healthier lives, and it is both reasonable and appropriate to revisit a standard that no longer reflects modern realities. Additionally, Maryland is increasingly out of step with neighboring jurisdictions. Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia maintain higher judicial retirement ages, and Virginia has already acted to raise its retirement age to 73. HB 638 ensures Maryland remains aligned with regional practices while maintaining a strong and capable judiciary.

HB 638 is also fiscally responsible. According to the Department of Legislative Services, this change is projected to reduce State pension liabilities by approximately \$21.7 million, with additional savings in annual contributions beginning in future fiscal years. These are meaningful, long-term savings achieved without reducing services or increasing costs.

This legislation also strengthens the quality, accessibility, and representativeness of our courts. Judges with extensive experience provide critical legal expertise, institutional knowledge, and continuity, particularly at a time when the judiciary plays an essential role in safeguarding the rule of law. Raising the retirement age also expands opportunities for experienced attorneys—many of whom are unable to pursue judicial positions earlier in their careers due to financial and professional obligations—to serve on the bench. This helps create a judiciary that more closely reflects the composition of the Maryland State Bar. Additionally, Maryland's Judicial Disabilities Commission ensures accountability by investigating and disciplining judges who fail to meet professional standards. For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 638.