



## TESTIMONY

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Judicial Proceedings

**DATE:** January 22, 2026

**POSITION:** Favorable with Amendments

**BILL:** SB 64

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) supports Senate Bill 64, with amendment.

MML supports the goal of modernizing public notice requirements. For decades, our member municipalities have been tethered to increasingly expensive public notice requirements, often posted in newspapers that do not report on the area's local politics or events. SB 64 represents an overdue step toward modernization.

However, we do not believe this legislation sufficiently remedies the challenge at hand. Based on the criteria outlined for digital placement, such coverage will likely remain unavailable to many jurisdictions in the state. There are also no provisions of the bill that clearly cut costs for taxpayers.

As an example of the costs – whenever a local jurisdiction is changing its charter, four separate public notice posts are required (Md. Code, Local Govt. § 4-304). If that municipality is in Montgomery or Prince George's, the Washington Post is likely their only “newspaper of general circulation.” The Washington Post charges \$500 per public notice. So, in those areas, **merely publicizing charter amendments can cost municipal taxpayers \$2000**.

One member reports spending \$15,000 annually on public notices. Combining all municipal, county, and state required public notices, taxpayers are likely paying hundreds of thousands of dollars – if not millions – each year to place public notices in the back of newspapers that are experiencing a decline in readership.

Local governments in several states are starting to see relief. Effective March 1, 2026, government entities in New Jersey can move most legal notices to their official websites. Utah has a robust "Public Notice Website" ([Utah.gov/pmnl/](http://Utah.gov/pmnl/)) which serves as the primary repository for notices. Florida allows local governments to post election and some legal notices on county websites instead of newspapers.

MML is advocating for a centralized Public Notice Portal to be housed within the Maryland State Archive. Like Utah's, it should be searchable and allow for notifications on topics of interest or jurisdictions of interest. We believe this modernization approach would save taxpayer dollars while preserving independent oversight and guaranteeing that these notices remain a permanent, unalterable part of Maryland's historical record.

For these reasons, the Maryland Municipal League requests a favorable report on SB 64 with amendments.

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For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:

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