

MARY BETH CAROZZA
Legislative District 38
Somerset, Wicomico,
and Worcester Counties

Education, Energy, and
the Environment Committee



Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 316
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3645 • 301-858-3645
800-492-7122 Ext. 3645
Fax 410-841-3006 • 301-858-3006
MaryBeth.Carozza@senate.state.md.us

Executive Nominations Committee

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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The Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
SB 976 – Wicomico County – Orphans' Court Judge – Annual Salary
Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza

Thank you, Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the distinguished Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee for this opportunity to present Senate Bill 976 – Wicomico County – Orphans' Court Judge – Annual Salary and ask for a favorable report.

This local legislation would increase the salaries for the Orphans' Court Judges for Wicomico County from \$11,000 to \$16,000, beginning with the 2026 term of office. The Orphans' Court for Wicomico County is comprised of three judges who are elected by voters to four-year terms. For awareness, there is an Orphans' Court with three judges in Baltimore City and each county in Maryland except for Harford, Howard, and Montgomery, which use a rotating circuit court judge model.

The Orphans' Court in Wicomico County plays an essential role in overseeing the administration of estates, safeguarding the interests of heirs and minors, resolving disputes, and ensuring compliance with an increasingly complex probate framework. The Court's responsibilities have expanded significantly in recent years, requiring substantial time commitments, ongoing continuing education, and careful deliberation in matters that directly impact families during difficult periods.

SB 976 would provide reasonable and appropriate compensation given the increasing workload and complex responsibilities of the Orphans' Court.

I thank you for your kind attention and consideration, and I respectfully request a favorable and swift report on SB 976.