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Position: FAV

Kaya C. Abukassis, Esq.
President, Queen Anne's County Bar Association
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(410) 758-4600

The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.
Senator, District 36
11 Bladen Street
James Senate Office Building
Room 423
Annapolis, MD 21401
Steve.Hershey@house.state.md.us

Re: Support of SB 358

Dear Senator Hershey:

I write to you in my capacity as President of the Queen Anne's County Bar Association, in full support of the legislation that you have introduced to add a second Circuit Court Judge to Queen Anne's County, as reflected in Senate Bill 358.

Our community, and the legal professionals who serve it, have long recognized the increasing demands placed on the Circuit Court in Queen Anne's County. The addition of a second judge would enhance the efficiency of the court system, allowing for a more timely and effective administration of justice. Given the growing population and the complexity of cases in our jurisdiction, the need for a second judge has become a pressing issue.

As legal practitioners, we have witnessed firsthand the strain on the court's resources. The introduction of this legislation is a vital step toward addressing these challenges. We are confident that this measure will not only improve the function of our local judiciary, but also provide broader benefits to the community, ensuring that access to justice remains a cornerstone of Queen Anne's County.

On behalf of the Queen Anne's County Bar Association, SB 358 has our full support.

Thank you for your advocacy. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Kaya C. Abukassis

Kaya C. Abukassis, Esq.
President, Queen Anne's County Bar
Association

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Position: FAV



*Queen
Anne's
County*

**THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY**

The Liberty Building
107 North Liberty Street
Centreville, MD 21617

e-mail: QACCommissioners&Administrator@qac.org

County Commissioners:

James J. Moran, At Large
Jack N. Wilson, Jr., District 1
J. Patrick McLaughlin, District 2
Philip L. Dumenil, District 3
Christopher M. Corchiarino, District 4

*County Administrator: Todd R. Mohn, PE
Executive Assistant to County Commissioners: Stephanie L. Jarrell
County Attorney: Patrick Thompson, Esquire*

January 29, 2026

The Honorable William Smith
Chairman, Judicial Proceedings
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB358 – Queen Anne’s County – Circuit Court Judgeships SUPPORT

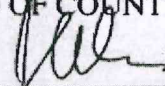
Dear Chairman Smith,

Please consider this letter of support for Senate Bill 358 This bill would increase the number of resident judges of the Circuit Court for Queen Anne’s County from one to two, and generally relating to circuit court judgeships in Queen Anne’s County.


We support this legislation and urge a favorable recommendation.

Respectfully,


QUEEN ANNE’S COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



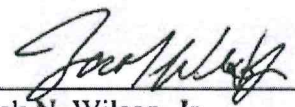
James Moran, President



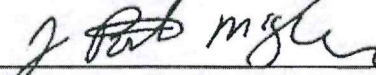
Christopher M. Corchiarino



Philip L. Dumenil



Jack N. Wilson, Jr.



J. Patrick McLaughlin

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Position: FAV

STEPHEN S. HERSHEY, JR.
Legislative District 36
Caroline, Cecil, Kent, and
Queen Anne's Counties

—
MINORITY LEADER
—

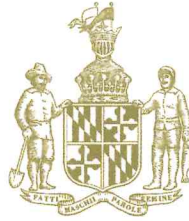
Finance Committee

Executive Nominations Committee

Rules Committee
—

Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics

Legislative Policy Committee



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 423
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3639
800-492-7122 Ext. 3639
Steve.Hershey@senate.maryland.gov

The Senate of Maryland
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 29, 2026

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Smith,

The Queen Annes's County Senate Delegation Supports Senate Bill 358 Queen Anne's County- Circuit Court Judgeships. I thank you for your committee's consideration of this bill and request a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "SHERSEY".

Senator Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.

sb358.pdf

Uploaded by: Will Vormelker

Position: INFO

HON. STACY A. MAYER
CIRCUIT COURT
JUDGE
BALTIMORE COUNTY
CHAIR

HON. RICHARD SANDY
CIRCUIT COURT
JUDGE
FREDERICK COUNTY
VICE-CHAIR



KELLEY O'CONNOR
ASSISTANT STATE COURT
ADMINISTRATOR
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS
P: (410) 260-1560

SUZANNE PELZ, ESQ.
SNR. GOVT. RELATIONS AND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
P: (410)260-1523

MARYLAND JUDICIAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Legislative Committee
Suzanne D. Pelz, Esq.
410-260-1523
RE: Senate Bill 358
Queen Anne's County – Circuit Court Judgeships
DATE: January 28, 2026
(2/3)
POSITION: Explanation of Non-Support

The Maryland Judiciary appreciates the Committee's consideration of all requests for new judgeships. Although the Judiciary will continue to review and assess the needs of an additional judgeship in Queen Anne's County, the methodology long used by the Judiciary to justify requests for new judgeships does not reflect a certified need for a judgeship in Queen Anne's County at this time.

The Judiciary uses a standard methodology to determine what locations have a certified need for a judgeship. The underlying model for establishing judicial officer need that is currently in use comes from the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). The model in use now was last fully updated in 2017, with a subsequent partial update in 2022, *State of Maryland Limited Scope Workload Adjustment for District and Circuit Court Judicial Officers*. As recommended by the NCSC, this model relies predominately on new case filings in the three most recent fiscal years: Fiscal Years 2023, 2024, and 2025. As reflected in the Judiciary's submission this year, the model identified a certified need for five additional judgeships.

While the model relies on case weights, the NCSC recognizes that other qualitative factors can be considered as well, including local court practices and variations in

policies among the State's Attorneys. Four circuit court jurisdictions in which the model did not identify a certified need requested additional judgeships. One of those is St. Mary's County. For reasons more fully explained in our submission and in future testimony before this Committee, the Judiciary has requested a new judgeship in St. Mary's County based on factors relevant to workload in that jurisdiction that are not accounted for in the model.

The Judiciary has not requested a new judgeship in the three other counties, including Queen Anne's County. Although each has made a good case for needing additional resources, the Judiciary has not identified sufficient factors relevant to workload in those jurisdictions that are not accounted for in the model. As a result, consistent with past practice and representations to the General Assembly, the Judiciary is not requesting additional judgeships in those jurisdictions and did not include additional PINs or funding for those counties in its budget submission.

Nonetheless, the Judiciary recognizes limitations of the current model and to update our model and ensure it is an accurate, current reflection of need, we have contracted with the NCSC to complete a new full-scale model update. The new workload assessment study will include a full judicial officer time study to help ensure that the case weights used to determine judicial workload are reflective of current practices. Results are expected to be available for use in the Fiscal Year 2028 judicial need certification analysis.

The Judiciary will continue to review and assess the need for judgeships across all jurisdictions.

cc. Hon. Stephen Hershey
Judicial Council
Legislative Committee
Kelley O'Connor