

26-0309 L Smith - Orphan's Court Judge's Salary-SB

Uploaded by: Laura Hurley

Position: FAV



WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND

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WICOMICO COUNTY COUNCIL
John T. Cannon, President/At-Large
Jeff Merritt, Vice-President/District #2
James Winn, At-Large
Shanie Shields, District #1
David Ennis, District #3

Josh Hastings, District #4
Joe Holloway, District #5
Laura Hurley, Council Administrator

March 9, 2026

Judicial Proceedings Committee
Attn: The Honorable Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Senator Smith and Committee Members:

RE: Wicomico County – Orphans’ Court Judge – Annual Salary

This letter is in support of Senate Bill No. 976 to amend the Estates and Trusts Article, Section 2-108(v), of the Annotated Code of Maryland to provide for an increase in the annual salaries of Orphans’ Court Judges for Wicomico County from \$11,600 to \$16,000, beginning with the 2026 term of office.

The Council recognizes the essential role of the Orphans’ Court 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 responsibilities of the Court 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.

Given the increased workload and complexity of the Court’s duties, the Council believes the requested adjustment is reasonable and appropriate, and better aligns compensation with the scope of responsibility carried by Orphans’ Court Judges.

The Wicomico County Council respectfully urges your favorable consideration of Senate Bill No. 976 during the 2026 General Assembly Session.

Sincerely,

WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Cannon", written over a horizontal line.

John T. Cannon, Council President

Enclosure

cc: Wicomico County Council
Wicomico County Executive
Bunky Luffman, Director of Administration

SENATE BILL 976

N2

6lr3648
CF HB 1588

By: **Senators Carozza and Mautz**
Introduced and read first time: February 14, 2026
Assigned to: Rules

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Wicomico County – Orphans’ Court Judge – Annual Salary**

3 FOR the purpose of increasing the annual salary of a judge of the Orphans’ Court in
4 Wicomico County; and generally relating to the Orphans’ Court in Wicomico County.

5 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
6 Article – Estates and Trusts
7 Section 2–108(v)(1)
8 Annotated Code of Maryland
9 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

10 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
11 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

12 **Article – Estates and Trusts**

13 2–108.

14 (v) (1) Each judge of the Court for Wicomico County shall receive an annual
15 salary of [~~\$11,600~~] **\$16,000** to be paid quarterly.

16 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, in accordance with Article
17 III, § 35 of the Maryland Constitution, this Act may not be construed to extend or apply to
18 the salary or compensation of a judge of the Orphans’ Court for Wicomico County while
19 serving in a term of office beginning before the effective date of this Act, but the provisions
20 of this Act concerning the salary or compensation of a judge of the Orphans’ Court for
21 Wicomico County shall take effect at the beginning of the next following term of office. This
22 limitation does not apply to an individual appointed or elected after the effective date of
23 this Act to fill out an unexpired term.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
2 1, 2026.

SB 976 - Carozza Testimony_FINAL.pdf

Uploaded by: Mary Beth Carozza

Position: FAV

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

Education, Energy, and
the Environment Committee



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Executive Nominations Committee

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 12, 2026

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.

SB976

Uploaded by: Mary Beth Carozza

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401
WICOMICO COUNTY DELEGATION
March 10, 2026

The Honorable Will Smith
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Smith,

The Wicomico County Delegation supports Senate Bill 976 – Wicomico County – Orphans’ Court Judge – Annual Salary. I thank you for your committee’s consideration of this bill and request a favorable report.

In Service,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Mary Beth Carozza".

MARY BETH CAROZZA
State Senator – District 38
Somerset, Worcester, and Wicomico

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Johnny Mautz".

JOHNNY MAUTZ
State Senator – District 37
Caroline, Dorchester, Talbot and Wicomico