

HB0130 Criminal Law - Deed Fraud - Prohibition, Deed Fraud Prevention Grant Fund, and Task Force to Study Deed Fraud

Judiciary Committee – February 3, 2024

Sponsor: Delegate Malcolm Ruff

Position: Favorable

Testimony of Mahasin El Amin, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Prince George’s County

Thank you, Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the committee, for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 130. For the record, my name is Mahasin El Amin, Clerk of the Circuit Court for Prince George’s County

Deed fraud is a growing concern in Maryland, and homeowners are alarmed by how easily their property can be stolen. Technology has made it easier for bad actors to create fraudulent documents, and the financial and emotional toll on victims and their families is devastating.

As a Clerk of the Circuit Court, my role is administrative. If a deed meets the legal requirements for recording, we are obligated to record it. Once that happens, the homeowner faces a long, expensive, and stressful process to resolve the issue through the courts.

That is why this bill is so important. A task force will help identify gaps and propose solutions to prevent these crimes. It is critical that elected Clerks of the Circuit Court have representation on this task force because we play a pivotal role in the recording process. Our perspective is essential to understanding where fraud enters the system and how to create practical safeguards that work in the real world.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 130, and I thank Delegate Ruff for sponsoring this important legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions.