



Law Offices of  
*Reverend Rickey Nelson Jones, Esquire*

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22 February 2021

Maryland House of Delegates  
Judiciary Committee

RE: Opposition To House Bills 0035 & 0447

Dear Judiciary Committee:

Over the last few years, I have traveled to Annapolis to speak in opposition to similar bills like 0035 and 0447 which seek to eliminate the present established order for contested judicial elections on the circuit courts. Once again, advocates for eliminating contested judicial elections on the circuit courts have persuaded some of your colleagues to “push” this matter once more. The idea is so bad and anti-democratic that I must devote more of my time to addressing it.

ONE, since contested elections for filling vacancies on the circuit court have been successful (even in the last election), the WILL of the people has been honored. Pushing eliminating contested judicial elections for circuit court seats undermines democracy.

TWO, the circuit courts in Maryland have significant and powerful influence over the lives of citizens, covering

everything from civil and criminal law to District Court and administrative agency appeals. The sweeping power circuit courts have in altering the very lives of people dictates never removing the electorate from what they do.

THREE, with the exception of Prince George's County and Baltimore City, there is a major race-exclusion problem on Maryland Circuit Courts. One example is Anne Arundel County. That county has excluded non-Caucasians from its bench in excess of 99% during its history. Due to this systemic racism, {i} protests have occurred in front of this court, {ii} communication with both federal and local government officials have occurred about this systemic racism, and {iii} this writer has filed both a state and federal lawsuit against this discriminatory practice. To wit, eliminating contested judicial elections for the circuit courts is, in essence, "codifying" systemic racism in the judiciary!

FINALLY, I will also sign up to speak in opposition to these Bills since I am uniquely qualified as someone who {i} has run in elections for circuit court vacancies, {ii} has sued the state about the racial exclusion on this court, {iii} has applied for vacancies on this court with objective multi-state, multi-discipline, legal knowledge, experience, and scholarship un-matched by any of those put on the Bench, and {iv} has run a private law firm covering Civil Rights for nearly three decades.

**Respectfully,**

*/s/ Rickey Nelson Jones*

**Rickey Nelson Jones**