

**SB0204 State Retirement and Pension System - Vesting and Retirement Allowance - Clerk of the Court and Register of Wills**

**Budget and Taxation Committee – February 2, 2023**

**Sponsor: Senator Michael Jackson**

**Position: Favorable**

**Testimony of Sandra Dalton, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Frederick County**

Thank you, Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chairman Rosapepe, and members of the committee, for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 204. For the record, my name is Sandra Dalton, Clerk of the Circuit Court for Frederick County.

The Clerks of the Circuit Court support SB 204, which would allow for the elected Clerks of the Circuit Court and the Register of Wills to vest in the State Retirement and Pension System with 8 years of eligible service instead of 10 years.

The Clerks believe that lowering the vesting requirements by just two years for a limited number of elected offices will not have a significant fiscal or administrative impact on the state. The Clerks and Registers are currently eligible members of the State Retirement System, so this change does not add any new members to the system. There are 24 elected Clerks and 24 elected Registers in the state, however the great majority are already vested in the system. Currently this bill will only affect 6 Circuit Court Clerks [Anne Arundel, Carroll, Harford, Prince George's & Wicomico Counties & Baltimore City] and 1 Register of Wills [Anne Arundel County].

This bill also does not change the contributions paid or benefits received, it only changes the time for Clerks and Registers to be vested in the system. Therefore, we believe the fiscal and administrative impact would be minimal on the current pension plan and vesting eligibility requirements.

The Circuit Court Clerks hope you will give a favorable report on SB 204, and we would like to thank Senator Jackson for sponsoring this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and I am available if you have any questions.