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Legislative District 30A
Anne Arundel County

Appropriations Committee

Subcommittees

Vice Chair, Health and Social Services

Oversight Committee on Pensions

Joint Committee on Administrative,
Executive, and Legislative Review

Vice Chair, Anne Arundel
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Delegate Dana Jones
Before the Ways and Means Committee

In Support of HB 700
Election Law - Election Judges - Revisions
February 13th, 2024, 1 PM

For the record - I am Delegate Dana Jones.

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee, I come before you today to introduce HB 700, which will expand ways we can assist our local boards of elections with the recruitment and retention of election judges.

Last session, this Committee passed HB 1200, which raised the minimum floor for election judge pay to \$250 per day worked, and a \$100 per day worked bonus to returning election judges. This was essential legislation, as in the previous election cycle, it was widely known and reported that counties were facing significant struggles recruiting election judges. Just weeks before the 2022 Gubernatorial election, Baltimore City was short more than 1,000 judges. And my home County of Anne Arundel was short 300. However, pay is not the only way in which we can improve recruitment and retention of our judges.

HB 700 expands on last year's efforts with some new additions, and a slight revision. First, "returning election judge" has been defined as a judge who served in the immediately preceding statewide election. This will provide needed clarity to local boards as they implement the new compensation policy.

Second, we want to encourage our youth to participate in civic engagement. To do this, this bill will allow public school students to earn service-learning hours for graduation, while also receiving compensation for their hard work. This incentivizes our young citizens to foster a deeper sense of civic responsibility and introduces them to the significance of this work.

Lastly, as some of you might now, there is a long and arduous packet of paperwork required to apply, serve, and receive compensation for work as an election judge. Additionally, this packet can vary in length greatly depending on the locality, and as result its complexity can be a roadblock to involvement. HB 700 directs the State Board to adopt regulations that standardizes and minimizes the forms and documentation required to be a judge Statewide. This will require significant coordination between the State and local boards, however the State Board is prepared and understanding of the concerted effort this will take.

With that, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 700.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dana Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Delegate Dana Jones