



Howard County Citizens Association

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Date: 12 February 2025

Subject: **HB0044 Testimony**

Position: **FAVOR**

To: Judiciary Committee Members,

I am Stuart Kohn representing the Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA as President. Our website can be viewed at <https://howardcountyhcca.org/>.

The HCCA, **FAVORS HB0044-2025** - Election Law – Circuit Court Judges – Nonpartisan Elections.

We have never understood why Circuit Court Judges in Maryland are party affiliated. They should be non-partisan to enable your constituents who are registered as “Unaffiliated ”or “Independent” to be permitted to vote for Circuit Court Judges as is done for School Board Members in Primary Elections.

Circuit Court Judges affiliated with a party are not relevant as to their role as a Judge. Their role is as follows:

- Hold an essential role within the judicial system.
- Ensure the fair and impartial administration of justice.
- Interpret and apply statutory and case law.
- Make determinations based on legal principles and evidence presented during proceedings.
- Presiding over all aspects of felony trials from pretrial hearings to sentencing.

Based on the aforementioned Circuit Court Judges should in no way be associated to either the “Democratic” or “Republican” Party. What is the rationale of their Party affiliation? Their role is not political! It is strictly a judicial position.

Those of your constituents who are registered as “Unaffiliated” should be extremely thankful for you providing them the opportunity to vote for Circuit Court Judges in all future Primary Elections.

As a side note we see that HB0778 as described in the synopsis “is proposing amendments to the Maryland Constitution relating to the selection and tenure of circuit court judges; altering the method of filling vacancies in the office of a judge of a circuit court; providing for retention elections following an appointment to fill a vacancy in the office of a judge of a circuit court; providing for a transitional period during which the terms of certain amendments are to become effective; and submitting this amendment

to the qualified voters of the State for their adoption or rejection.” Unfortunately, HB0778 based on the synopsis does not include the intent of HB0044.

Thank You for your consideration in voting in **Favor** of HB0044-2025. We would appreciate any feedback.

Stuart Kohn

HCCA President