

WRITTEN AND ORAL TESTIMONY

FROM - JAMES SHALLECK, Former President Montgomery County Board of Elections

IN SUPPORT – SB379 (Earlier Canvassing)

I served for approximately six (6) years as President of the Montgomery County Board of Elections. Over those years, I saw the number of mail-in ballots increase dramatically. They have become very popular and have in more and more elections determined the winner of elections.

In 2022, 513,238 mail-in ballots were cast for Governor throughout Maryland. In a number of races, mail-in ballots determined the winner of the election. Further, election day tallies were, in a number of races, overtaken by mail-in ballot tallies to determine election winners. Mail-in ballots will only increase in the future. They are very popular and critical to our ballot counts.

Presently, the counting of mail-in ballots cannot begin for two (2) days after election day. We had 118,530 mail-in ballots in the 2022 General Election (2018 General Election had 37,538 mail-in ballots). This increase shows the popularity of mail-in voting. It will only increase. These numbers are just for Montgomery County.

SB379 is essential to relieve the extraordinary and time-consuming burden on our canvassers and the significant time delay in finalizing our canvass and informing the public of the election results. Now they wait weeks for results. This could extend to Christmas if this trend continues. We must begin the canvass at least 8 days before the start of Early Voting. This is a bi-partisan solution to an increasing problem with our canvassing of votes in Maryland.