
Planned Parenthood of Maryland

Committee: Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

Bill number: SB 605 - Election Law - Automatic Voter Registration - Alterations

Hearing Date: February 21, 2024

Position: Support

Planned Parenthood of Maryland (PPM) strongly supports *SB 605 - Election Law - Automatic Voter Registration - Alterations*. This bill establishes the most efficient and secure system for registering eligible voters and updating current voters' registrations, based on successful efforts

Research has proven that Maryland's current system misses out on potential registered voters. Requiring voters to take an affirmative, seemingly unrelated step while completing an errand such as engaging with the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) or the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE).

Since at least the summer of 2016, PPM's outreach and education programs have participated in voter registration. Between partnering with organizations like Black Girls Vote, registering patients in and outside our waiting rooms, and going door to door in the communities we serve, PPM employees and volunteers have extensive experience engaging with Marylanders who aren't registered or don't have updated registration.

The most poignant of these interactions are people who had given up on the idea of registering to vote because of previous convictions—in some cases, decades-old convictions. Despite Maryland's restoration of civil rights to returning citizens, many people still don't know they are eligible. Having the state be responsible for determining eligibility of voters, as this bill provides for, will increase registrations for returning citizens regardless of their awareness of their rights.

PPM patients, volunteers and the members of the communities we serve all benefit from easier participation in the democratic process. For the foregoing reasons, we ask for a favorable report for SB 605. If we can provide any further information, please contact Erin Bradley at Erin.Bradley@ppm.care or (443) 604-3544.