



Testimony for SB1029  
**Election Law – Registered Voter List and Petitions (Ballot Petition Modernization Act)**  
March 1, 2024  
**Position: Favorable**

Dear Senator Feldman and members of Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

My name is Loraine Arikat and I am the Senior Policy Analyst at 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East in Maryland and D.C. 1199 SEIU is the largest healthcare union in the nation, with over 10,000 members in hospitals, long term care settings, and federally qualified health centers in the region. 1199SEIU is a proud lead organization of the **With Us for Us Community Wealth Building Coalition** (WUFU) in Baltimore City. The WUFU coalition aims to bring together grassroots community leaders that are committed to organizing for equitable development, holding anchor institutions accountable to investing in the community, and racial justice.

We support SB 1029 because our coalition is currently leading a Baltimore City charter amendment ballot initiative that would create a Community Wealth Building Fund governed by a People’s Commission. As a grassroots coalition aiming to bring community power to Baltimore City’s most disinvested neighborhoods, we know first-hand that collecting valid, legible signatures is tedious and needlessly difficult. This legislation would ensure that every eligible voter who wants to support a community-powered ballot initiative like ours will have their signature counted.

The Ballot Petition Modernization Act is consistent with our State Constitution’s focus on representative and grassroots democracy, and it is a commonsense modernization of a process that is key to utilizing the voting rights ensured in our Constitution.

For these reasons and more 1199 SEIU urges a favorable report on SB 1029.

Sincerely,

Loraine Arikat  
Senior Policy Analyst  
1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East  
[Loraine.arikat@1199.org](mailto:Loraine.arikat@1199.org)

With Us for Us: Community Wealth Building Coalition is comprised of Baltimore-based organizations including *Baltimore Renters United, Baltimore Student Union, Baltimore Roundtable on Economic Development (BRED), Black Yield, CASA, Clean Water Action, Community Development Network of Maryland, Communities United, Community Wealth Builders, Economic Action Maryland, Energy Justice Network, Invest York Road, Jews United for Justice, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy, Metro Baltimore AFL-CIO, AFT-Maryland, No Boundaries Coalition, North East Housing Initiative, Organizing Black, Partners for Dignity and Rights, Plantation Park Heights Urban Farm, Progressive Maryland, Public Justice Center, Red Emma’s Bookstore and Cafe, SHARE Baltimore, South Baltimore Community Land Trust, Teachers and Researchers United at Johns Hopkins University, Village of Love and Resistance, 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East*