

Subject: Favorable SB1029

Date: March 1st

From: National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

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To: Senate Education Environment and Energy Committee

The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the Education Environment and Energy Committee to support SB1029. This bill will permit the use of electronic signatures when people are signing a petition. The person can sign a petition to put a question on the ballot, to create a new political party, or to appoint a member of a charter board, etc.... The petition process is a basic tenant of democracy because it allows people to express their views on many subjects.

SB1029 allows more participation by people because they can use an electronic signature. There are numerous security requirements in the bill that will strengthen the validity of the electronic signature. It will eliminate one source of voting discrimination faced by people with disabilities because they will not have to submit paper signatures. People with disabilities will be more likely to participate when they can satisfy the requirement with an electronic signature.

Please vote in favor of SB1029. Give persons with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in democracy.