

Witness: Lori Stepp

Jurisdiction: Talbot County

Senate Bill 1052: Written Testimony– Maintenance and Public Disclosure of Election Records.

Sponsor: Senator Mautz

Position: **SUPPORT**

I write to you to ask for your favorable vote in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 1052 to ensure that all local and State boards of election retain all voting and election related materials for at least 10 years and to allow public access to this information. Having reviewed the Office of Legislative Audit Reports of the State Board of Elections, each report covers periods of either three or four years and is published a year after the reporting period.¹ This means the public does not have access to the audit findings until four to five years later, which is beyond the scope of the current retention period of three years. I've highlighted the reporting periods as well as report publishing date to demonstrate this point:

December 3, 2018 through July 31, 2022 (report published on October 31, 2023);

October 23, 2015 through December 2, 2018 (report published on December 19, 2019);

August 23, 2012 through October 22, 2015 (report published on April 24, 2017);

July 1, 2009 through August 22, 2012 (report published on March 24, 2014);

March 1, 2006 through June 20, 2009 (report published on June 10, 2010)

Additionally, there are some “*significant deficiencies*” of audit findings in these reports to include:

- **redacted cybersecurity-related findings,**
- Inadequate *authentication of certain voters who requested absentee ballots* (repeated finding)
- not ensuring personally identifiable information from the MDVOTERS database provided to a third party was properly safeguarded (repeated finding)
- not ensuring the accuracy of the data recorded in MDVOTERS or whether related user access to the system was appropriate (repeated finding)
- procedures were not sufficient to ensure the propriety of the Statewide voter registration database
- not ensuring local boards removed convicted felons from the voter registration database (repeated finding)
- not obtaining an independent audit of system controls over the Statewide voter registration system
- not addressing **known security risks** associated with Online Voter Registration System,
- **firewall used to help secure the State Board of Election Headquarters Local Area Network was not properly configured or monitored.**

With so many significant findings found in these audit reports dating back to March 1, 2006, I hope you will see the importance of a longer term for records retention and public access to this information. These findings should be concerning to all voters and hope that you will vote in favor of **SUPPORTING** this bill.

¹ Office of Legislative Services, Maryland General Assembly; State Board of Elections Reports: website accessed on March 5, 2024: [Report | Office of Legislative Audits \(state.md.us\)](https://www.sbe.state.md.us/Reports)