



**TESTIMONY FOR HB1022  
Election Law - Incarcerated Individuals - Voting Eligibility and Access  
Voting Rights for All Act**

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Wilkins

**Committee:** Judiciary, Ways and Means

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Aileen Alex, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB1022 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The Voting Rights for All Act in Maryland aims to enhance voting eligibility and access for incarcerated individuals. This bill offers what our Coalition considers two transformational initiatives in seeking universal representation at the polls.

First are ballot drop boxes and voting information. HB1022 requires ballot drop boxes and information related to voting for eligible voters by correctional facilities and the State Board of Elections.

This ensures that incarcerated individuals have access to voting materials and can participate in the democratic process. A Voting Rights Ombudsman called for in the legislation would advocate for voting rights, address any challenges faced by incarcerated voters, and ensure fair access to a ballot.

Second is allowing expanded eligibility for registered voters. The Act allows individuals convicted of a felony and serving a court-ordered sentence of imprisonment for the conviction to vote. Currently, if you have been convicted of a felony, you can vote only after completing a court-ordered sentence of imprisonment.

This Act gives voice to over 15,000 people under the jurisdiction of the State of Maryland correctional authorities. It is only fair that all eligible Maryland residents can exercise their right to vote. For the felon, this change promotes reintegration and civic engagement.

In addition to helping to get great bills like HB1022 passed, MLC's mission is to inform voters about such legislation and their legislators. We appreciate any and all efforts to inform voters, enhance representation, and increase voter turn-out for all Marylanders.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.