



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

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BILL: HOUSE BILL 1022

POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION

EXPLANATION: This bill requires the Department of Public Safety and Correctional, in coordination with the State Board of Elections, to facilitate voting in State correctional facilities.

COMMENTS:

- The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services' Division of Correction operates 13 State correctional facilities housing offenders sentenced to periods of incarceration for 18 months and longer. The Department also oversees five facilities located in Baltimore City that houses pretrial detainees and incarcerated individuals sentenced to incarceration for periods of 18 months and less.
- The Department understands the importance of voting and is committed to ensuring all eligible voters incarcerated in State correctional and pretrial facilities are afforded the right to vote and that each eligible voter has access to voter material, including registration applications and mail in ballot request forms.
- The provisions of this bill are duplicative, as the Department has a robust voter program in place and works collaboratively with the State Board of Elections (SBE) and the local boards to facilitate voting for eligible incarcerated individuals in State correctional facilities as required by HB 222 - Value My Vote Act that passed in 2021 and contained the same requirements as this bill.
- HB 1411 requires the SBE to provide ballot boxes to correctional facilities. However, the DOC already installed ballot boxes in all State correctional facilities that are monitored by security cameras.
- In addition, ballot boxes are also available at the Baltimore City Booking and Intake Center to facilitate voting as required by SB 525 that also passed in 2021. The Department coordinates with the local

boards of elections to collect the election material from the ballot boxes at BCBIC and the DOC correctional facilities.

- Furthermore, the Department ensures election notices, deadlines, and promotional information to advise incarcerated individuals of voter eligibility requirements, right to request a voter registration are posted throughout the correctional facilities and are also available to incarcerated individuals through case management.
- Restoration of voting rights notices are also posted throughout each correctional facility to inform ineligible incarcerated individuals of their eligibility to vote upon release. This information is also included in every incarcerated individual's release packet, along with voter registration information and forms.
- The Department will continue to ensure that all eligible incarcerated individuals have access to election material as well as the opportunity to vote.

CONCLUSION: The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services respectfully urges the Committee to consider this information as it deliberates on House Bill 1022.