



## Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

House Ways and Means Committee

HB 202: Election Law – Absentee Ballots – Signature Requirements and Verification

February 13, 2024

Position: Oppose

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) is an independent, public policy organization that creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. Our vision is that people with and without disabilities in Maryland live, learn, work, and play together.

### WHAT does this legislation do?

- HB 202 requires a local board of elections to verify an individual's signature on the envelope for a mail-in absentee ballot before counting the ballot. It also requires a witness sign the envelope.
- The signature requirements is waived for active duty service members or their spouses if they are living overseas.

### WHY is this a problem?

- It makes voting more difficult and cumbersome. It adds more unnecessary steps to the process.
- It creates barriers for people with developmental disabilities because:
  - People with disabilities are more likely to vote by absentee ballot due to existing voting location accessibility issues.
  - People with disabilities are more likely not to be able to provide a written signature.

Voters with developmental disabilities want and need access to participate effectively in the electoral process. HB 202 is a step in the wrong direction. **For that reason, the DD Council opposes HB 202.**

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