

SB0267 - Unfavorable

Honorable Delegates

Please enter an unfavorable report about SB0267.

Proposed section 4-102(c)(3) on page 2 lines 20-24 would prohibit reusing the signatures on a petition should the petition fail to meet the unstated requirements in subsection B of Article 4-102 and in the uncited subsection of Title 6.

IF AN OFFICIAL DETERMINATION HAS BEEN MADE THAT A PETITION FOR THE FORMATION OF A NEW POLITICAL PARTY FAILS TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION OR TITLE 6 OF THIS ARTICLE, THE SIGNATURES SUBMITTED WITH THE PETITION MAY NOT BE RESUBMITTED WITH A SUBSEQUENT PETITION.

Subsection B(2)(i) in 4-102 requires at least 10,000 valid signatures by a certain date to form a new political party.

Title 6, Subtitle 2, section 6-205(d) allows additional signatures to be added to a petition if the petition is rejected before the deadline by filing an amended information page with additional signature pages.

This bill would make a difficult process for obtaining valid signatures that much more difficult, if the number of valid signatures is determined to be less than 10,000. Currently, if time remains before the deadline, the organizers could keep the valid signatures and just obtain the signatures needed to reach the 10,000 threshold.

If this bill passes, the organizers would need to start over to obtain the needed 10,000 signatures.

This bill is creating an unfair burden on the citizenry trying to follow an already difficult process. Thus, I agree with position of the Maryland Forward Party, whose representative provided the following written testimony:

Our organization, while understanding the immense workload on the state board of elections during an election year, believes that the bar for entry and to maintain ballot access is already incredibly demanding and our concern is that this proposed revision increases this difficulty and unnecessarily increases the barrier for entry. We do not believe that personnel or workload restrictions within the board of election should negatively impact the potential for the formation of a new or previously established political party. Board of Elections processes should ideally not be altered in a way that negatively impacts Maryland's democratic process and potentially limits the voices and representation of Maryland Voters.

Please enter an unfavorable decision about SB0267.

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