

January 24, 2025

Testimony on HB 201
Election Law – Absentee Ballot Application – Sending to Eligible Voters Before Primary
Elections
Ways & Means

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland supports HB 201 which would require that local boards of elections send a mail-in ballot request form to eligible voters who have not opted into the permanent mail-in ballot program. The request form is to be sent at least 60 days before each primary election.

According to the State Board of Elections, about 22% of voters who voted in the 2024 general election chose to vote by mail and more than 880,000 mail-in voting packets were sent to voters. These individuals requested or opted into the permanent mail list since ballots were not automatically mailed to voters as they were during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the primary method of voting continues to be in person, the number of individuals choosing to vote by mail has significantly increased. Request forms being sent to voters played a role in the boost of those choosing to continue using this method.

The mail-in voting program boosted participation in the previous two elections cycles and is essential for those unable to vote in person. HB 201 would maintain the practice of mailing request forms which will remind voters that they can conveniently and securely participate in our elections while remote.

We urge a favorable report.