



**TESTIMONY FOR
SB0141 Election Law – Election Misinformation, Election Disinformation, and
Deepfakes**

Bill Sponsor: Senator Hester

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, Co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0141 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are an association of unpaid citizen advocates—individuals and grassroots groups in every district across the state—representing and supporting more than 30,000 Marylanders.

The rise of digital misinformation, coordinated disinformation campaigns, and AI-generated deepfakes poses a serious and rapidly escalating threat to Maryland’s democratic process. These tactics are increasingly used to target low-information and disadvantaged voters with false claims about how, when, or where to vote. Because this content is often anonymous, unattributed, and designed to spread quickly, voters have little ability to distinguish truth from manipulation. Deepfakes, in particular, now could allow malicious actors to fabricate audio or video that convincingly impersonates trusted officials or candidates, creating confusion and undermining public confidence.

While the Maryland State Board of Elections has taken proactive steps to address misinformation, current law does not provide the authority or structure needed to respond effectively to these emerging threats. SB0141 fills that gap by requiring the State Administrator of Elections to investigate credible reports of misinformation, disinformation, or deepfakes and to issue timely corrective information to the public. The bill also establishes clear prohibitions on knowingly creating or distributing deepfakes that materially mislead voters and provides meaningful civil and criminal penalties to deter such conduct. Additionally, the use of a public reporting portal will help Marylanders identify and flag harmful content quickly.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition’s mission is to inform voters about legislation and their legislators. Coordinated disinformation campaigns—especially those amplified by AI—undermine this work and threaten the integrity of our elections. SB0141 offers common-sense, urgently needed protections to ensure Maryland residents can trust that the information they receive about elections is accurate and reliable.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on SB0141.