



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 4th 2026

HB115

**Election Law - Individuals Released from State Correctional Facilities - Automatic
Restoration of Voter Registration
Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **House Bill 115**. The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 115 strengthens Maryland's commitment to civic participation by ensuring a smoother and more efficient process for restoring voter registration to individuals returning home from State correctional facilities. Under this legislation, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services would send the State Board of Elections a weekly list of individuals released from incarceration, including their names and new residential addresses. The State Board would then automatically restore voter registration for any individual who had been registered to vote prior to incarceration.

This policy reflects a simple but meaningful principle: when individuals complete their sentences and return to their communities, they should also regain their place in our civic life. Voting is a cornerstone of democracy and an important part of reintegration. Automatically restoring registration streamlines the process, reduces confusion, and helps ensure that returning citizens can fully participate in the communities they call home.

This legislation also aligns with broader efforts to reduce recidivism. Research consistently shows that when individuals feel connected to their communities—socially, economically, and civically—they are more likely to successfully rebuild their lives. Restoring the right to vote fosters dignity, belonging, and a sense of responsibility, all of which benefit not only returning citizens but the community.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **House Bill 115**.