

Testimony Against HB0156

Honorable Delegates

Please enter an unfavorable report on HB0156

I oppose

- Authorizing unaffiliated voters to request to affiliate with a political party at an early voting center during a primary election and vote a provisional ballot for the voter's preferred political party; and
- Requiring an election judge to determine whether the voter resides in the county in which the voter seeks to vote.

While I am in favor of the spirit of the bill, I agree with the points made by the Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) with the prior version of this bill during the last session (HB0257). They presented the following reasons why allowing this may create more problems than it solves: ([HB257-2024 .docx \(maryland.gov\)](#))

- Increase in Provisional Ballots:
- Confusion between 3rd Party and Unaffiliated Voters:
- Gaming the System
- Impact on Ballot and Supply Orders

I do not see where this year's bill has addressed these four issues.

Also, unaffiliated voters or voters from any other party, have plenty of time to formally switch their registration to vote in the primary. The last day to change affiliation before the primary is June 2 and the first day of early voting is June 11.

This bill seems to be designed for those unaffiliated voters who wait until early voting begins to decide that they want to vote in the primary, show up, and then are told they cannot do so. Instead of passing this bill, perhaps the State Board of Elections should run ads in May reminding unaffiliated voters they have until June 2 to register with a party if they want to vote in the Primary (some unaffiliated voters who just moved to Maryland from states with open primaries may not be aware that they will not be able to vote in our primary).

Because this bill does not seem to address the issues raised last session by MAEO, I am asking you to enter an unfavorable report on HB0156

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