



TESTIMONY TO THE GOVERNMENT, LABOR, AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

HB 115 Election Law - Individuals Released from State Correctional Facilities - Automatic Restoration of Voter Registration

POSITION – Support

BY: Linda T. Kohn, President

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The League of Women Voters of Maryland believes that our election systems should produce candidates and elected officials who represent the community, are feasible to implement, increase voter participation, and help ensure minority views have some influence.

While it would be a small change, the passage of HB 115 would ensure that those who are making the transition from being incarcerated to being back at home are able to have their voting rights fully restored. Oftentimes, those who are transitioning become some of the most vulnerable members of our community. They are released, usually with minimal state resources, to figure out life on their own. This can include updating driver's licenses and healthcare, re-establishing themselves in their homes and families, and finding work. LWVMD believes that having voting rights restored should not be considered or seen as an obstacle

To have a robust, meaningful democracy, Maryland needs to ensure all eligible voters can vote. HB 115 is a common-sense approach to re-enfranchising people who deserve to have their voices heard. Some opposition would have you believe that this would be a laborious process and would weigh too heavily on those involved. LWVMD disagrees wholeheartedly with this sentiment. Because it is done weekly, fewer people would be going through the process at any given time. More than that, SBE is capable of implementing this process using the technology they already use.

For the above reasons, LWVMD urges a favorable report on HB 115.