



SIERRA CLUB

MARYLAND CHAPTER

P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Government, Labor, and Elections
Testimony on: HB 115 Election Law – Individuals Released From State Correctional Facilities – Automatic Restoration of Voter Registration
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 4, 2026

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club urges a favorable report on HB 115. The bill will make restoration of voter registration more automatic and seamless when individuals are released from incarceration.

Under existing Maryland law, individuals convicted of a felony do not have the right to vote while incarcerated but regain the right to vote when their incarceration ends unless they were convicted for buying or selling votes. Existing law also requires that released prisoners be informed that they have the right to vote and given an opportunity to register as they are released.

This bill requires the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) to send weekly lists of individuals released from incarceration and their new addresses to the State Board of Elections. The bill requires the State Board of Elections to then identify each individual on the list who was registered to vote before incarceration, and to restore their voter registration at their new Maryland address.

The bill requires the State Elections Director to send a notice to each such individual's new residential address telling them that they have been re-registered and are eligible to vote and giving information about how to update their registration. The bill prohibits releasing to the public the fact that a voter's registration was restored through the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

The Sierra Club and its members advocate on behalf of both the natural and human environments, including promoting racial and social equity. As a grassroots organization, we believe that voting should be as accessible and convenient as possible for all individuals who are eligible to vote. This bill will make voter registration more automatic and convenient for returning citizens as they are released from confinement.

For those reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 115.

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