
By: **Delegate Shriver**

Introduced and read first time: February 23, 1998

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Election Law - Voter Registration - State Institutions of Higher Education**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring each State institution of higher education to provide
4 enrollees of the institution the opportunity to register to vote in conjunction with
5 the individual's enrollment, registration, or payment process; and generally
6 relating to voter registration activities and requirements at State institutions of
7 higher education.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
9 Article 33 - Election Code
10 Section 3-204
11 Annotated Code of Maryland
12 (1997 Replacement Volume and 1997 Supplement)
13 (As enacted by Chapter _____ (S.B. 118/H.B. 127) of the Acts of the General
14 Assembly of 1998)

15 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
16 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

17 **Article 33 - Election Code**

18 3-204.

19 (a) (1) The State Board shall designate public agencies and
20 nongovernmental agencies as voter registration agencies where qualified individuals
21 may apply to register to vote.

22 (2) The State Board shall designate the following offices as voter
23 registration agencies:

24 (i) All offices in the State that provide public assistance; [and]

25 (ii) All offices in the State that provide State-funded programs
26 primarily engaged in providing services to individuals with disabilities; AND

1 (III) EACH STATE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

2 (3) The State Board and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly develop
3 and implement procedures for persons to apply to register to vote at recruitment
4 offices of the armed forces of the United States, which shall be deemed voter
5 registration agencies.

6 (b) Each voter registration agency, as provided in subsection (a)(2) and (3) of
7 this section, shall:

8 (1) Distribute a voter registration application approved by the State
9 Board or the Federal Election Commission with each application for service or
10 assistance it renders and with each recertification, renewal, or change of address
11 form relating to such service or assistance;

12 (2) Provide a document to prospective registrants OR ENROLLEES AND,
13 IN THE CASE OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, AT THE TIME THE
14 INDIVIDUAL ENROLLS, REGISTERS, OR PAYS FOR COURSE WORK PROVIDED BY THE
15 INSTITUTION, that includes:

16 (i) The question, "If you are not registered to vote where you live
17 now, would you like to apply to register to vote here today?";

18 (ii) If the agency provides public assistance, the statement,
19 "Applying to register or declining to register to vote will not affect the amount of
20 assistance that you will be provided by this agency.";

21 (iii) Boxes for the applicant to check to indicate whether the
22 applicant would like to register or declines to register to vote together with the
23 statement (in close proximity to the boxes and in prominent type), "If you do not check
24 either box, you will be considered to have decided not to register to vote at this time.";

25 (iv) The statement, "If you would like help in filling out the voter
26 registration application form, we will help you. The decision whether to seek or accept
27 help is yours. You may fill out the application form in private.";

28 (v) The statement, "If you believe that someone has interfered with
29 your right to register or to decline to register to vote, your right to privacy in deciding
30 whether to register or in applying to register to vote, or your right to choose your own
31 political party or other political preference, you may file a complaint with the State
32 Board of Elections"; and

33 (vi) The address and toll free telephone number of the State Board;

34 (3) Provide each applicant who does not decline to register to vote and
35 who accepts assistance the same degree of assistance with regard to completion of the
36 registration OR ENROLLMENT application AND MATERIALS as is provided by the office
37 with regard to the completion of its own applications, unless the applicant refuses
38 such assistance; and

1 (4) Accept the completed voter registration application for transmittal to
2 the appropriate election board.

3 (c) An applicant may mail the voter registration application to the
4 appropriate State election official or return it to the voter registration agency for
5 transmittal to the appropriate election official.

6 (d) Within 5 days from the acceptance of a voter registration application, the
7 voter registration agency shall forward the application to the appropriate State
8 election official.

9 (e) If a voter registration agency is an office described in [subparagraph]
10 SUBSECTION (a)(2)(ii) of this section, which provides services to an individual with a
11 disability at the individual's home, the agency shall provide the services described at
12 the individual's home.

13 (f) (1) An individual who provides any service described in subsection (b) of
14 this section may not:

15 (i) Seek to influence an applicant's political preference or party
16 registration;

17 (ii) Display any such political preference or party allegiance; or

18 (iii) Make any statement to an applicant or take any action the
19 purpose or effect of which is to lead the applicant to believe that a decision to register
20 or not to register has any bearing on the availability of services or benefits.

21 (2) No information relating to a declination to register to vote in
22 connection with an application made at an office designated as a voter registration
23 agency may be used for any purpose other than the maintenance of voter registration
24 statistics.

25 (3) Notwithstanding § 3-501 of this title and § 10-611 of the State
26 Government Article, the identity of a voter registration agency through which a
27 particular voter has registered may not be disclosed to the public.

28 (g) Regulations necessary to carry out the requirements of this section and §
29 3-203 of this subtitle, including provisions for training the employees of voter
30 registration agencies and the Motor Vehicle Administration, shall be adopted by the
31 State Board in cooperation with each agency.

32 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
33 January 1, 1999.