

SENATE BILL 343

G1
SB 711/15 – EHE

9lr0692

By: **Senator Kagan**

Introduced and read first time: January 30, 2019

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 6, 2019

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Election Law – Voting by Absentee Ballot – Prepaid Postage for Return of**
3 **Ballots**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring that certain envelopes required to be used by voters voting
5 by absentee ballot to return their ballots include prepaid postage; requiring that
6 absentee ballots be accompanied by instructions for the postage of certain absentee
7 ballot envelopes; ~~authorizing~~ requiring the State Board of Elections to reimburse ~~a~~
8 each local board of elections ~~on petition by the local board~~ for a certain percentage of
9 the cost of prepaid postage included on absentee ballot envelopes provided to certain
10 voters; and generally relating to prepaid postage for the return of absentee ballots.

11 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
12 Article – Election Law
13 Section 9–310
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2017 Replacement Volume and 2018 Supplement)

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

18 **Article – Election Law**

19 9–310.

20 (a) (1) This subsection applies only to an absentee ballot that is sent by mail.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 (2) An absentee ballot shall be enclosed in specially printed envelopes, the
2 form and content of which shall be prescribed by the State Board.

3 (3) (i) A local board may use either two envelopes or three envelopes.

4 (ii) If two envelopes are used, the inner envelope shall be designated
5 the "ballot/return envelope", and, when issued, it shall fit inside the envelope designated
6 the "outgoing envelope".

7 (iii) If three envelopes are used, the innermost envelope shall be
8 designated the "ballot envelope", which shall fit inside the envelope designated the "return
9 envelope", both of which, when issued, shall fit inside the envelope designated the "outgoing
10 envelope".

11 **(IV) THE BALLOT/RETURN ENVELOPE DESCRIBED UNDER**
12 **SUBPARAGRAPH (II) OF THIS PARAGRAPH AND THE RETURN ENVELOPE DESCRIBED**
13 **UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (III) OF THIS PARAGRAPH PROVIDED TO A VOTER VOTING**
14 **BY ABSENTEE BALLOT SHALL INCLUDE PREPAID POSTAGE.**

15 **(4) (I) AN ABSENTEE BALLOT SHALL BE ACCOMPANIED BY**
16 **INSTRUCTIONS FOR POSTAGE OF THE BALLOT/RETURN ENVELOPE OR THE RETURN**
17 **ENVELOPE.**

18 **(II) THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR POSTAGE SHALL INCLUDE:**

19 **1. A STATEMENT THAT THE BALLOT/RETURN ENVELOPE**
20 **OR RETURN ENVELOPE INCLUDES PREPAID POSTAGE AND MAY BE MAILED AS IS;**
21 **AND**

22 **2. DIRECTIONS FOR HOW A VOTER MAY ATTACH**
23 **POSTAGE FOR THE PURPOSE OF REDUCING THE COSTS OF THE LOCAL BOARD.**

24 **[(4)] (5)** When voted and returned to the local board, an absentee ballot
25 shall be enclosed in a ballot envelope or ballot/return envelope, on which has been printed
26 an oath prescribed by the State Board.

27 **(B) ~~ON PETITION OF A LOCAL BOARD, THE~~ THE STATE BOARD MAY SHALL**
28 **REIMBURSE ~~THE~~ EACH LOCAL BOARD FOR 50% OF THE COST OF PREPAID POSTAGE**
29 **INCLUDED ON BALLOT/RETURN ENVELOPES OR RETURN ENVELOPES PROVIDED TO**
30 **A VOTER VOTING BY ABSENTEE BALLOT UNDER SUBSECTION (A)(3)(IV) OF THIS**
31 **SECTION.**

1 **[(b)] (C)** If an absentee ballot is sent by the Internet or facsimile transmission,
2 the local board shall provide the voter with an envelope template, the oath prescribed by
3 the State Board, and instructions for marking and returning the absentee ballot.

4 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
5 October 1, 2019.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.