SENATE BILL 285

By: Senator Hough
Introduced and read first time: January 19, 2022
Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

AN ACT concerning

Election Law – Campaign Signs – Prohibitions

FOR the purpose of establishing the offense of willfully and maliciously destroying, injuring, or defacing campaign signs; establishing the offense of willfully and knowingly obtaining or exerting unauthorized control over campaign signs under certain circumstances; and generally relating to campaign signs.

BY adding to
Article – Election Law
Section 16–904
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2017 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
Article – Election Law
Section 16–1001(b) and (c)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2017 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

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

Article – Election Law

16–904.

(A) (1) A PERSON MAY NOT WILLFULLY AND MALICIOUSLY DESTROY,
INJURE, OR DEFACE A CAMPAIGN SIGN THAT IS ON ANOTHER PERSON’S PROPERTY.

(2) A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SUBSECTION IS GUILTY OF A
MISDEMEANOR AND ON CONVICTION IS SUBJECT TO A FINE OF NOT MORE THAN $1,000 OR IMPRISONMENT FOR NOT MORE THAN 60 DAYS OR BOTH.

(B) (1) A PERSON MAY NOT WILLFULLY OR KNOWINGLY OBTAIN OR EXERT UNAUTHORIZED CONTROL OVER A CAMPAIGN SIGN, IF THE PERSON:

(i) INTENDS TO DEPRIVE THE OWNER OF OWNERSHIP OF OR CONTROL OVER THE CAMPAIGN SIGN;

(ii) WILLFULLY OR KNOWINGLY USES, CONCEALS, OR ABANDONS THE CAMPAIGN SIGN IN A MANNER THAT DEPRIVES THE OWNER OF OWNERSHIP OF OR CONTROL OVER THE CAMPAIGN SIGN; OR

(iii) USES, CONCEALS, OR ABANDONS THE CAMPAIGN SIGN KNOWING THE USE, CONCEALMENT, OR ABANDONMENT WILL MOST LIKELY DEPRIVE THE OWNER OF OWNERSHIP OF OR CONTROL OVER THE CAMPAIGN SIGN.

(2) A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SUBSECTION IS GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR AND ON CONVICTION IS SUBJECT TO A FINE OF NOT MORE THAN $1,000 OR IMPRISONMENT FOR NOT MORE THAN 90 DAYS OR BOTH.

(b) A person who is convicted of any criminal violation of this article shall be disqualified permanently from serving as an election judge, board member, or employee of a board.

(c) A candidate who is convicted of any practice prohibited by this article shall be ineligible to be elected or appointed to any public office or employment for a period of 5 years following the date of the conviction.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2022.