

## Chapter 220

**(House Bill 371)**

AN ACT concerning

**Election Law – Recounts – Procedures**

FOR the purpose of requiring a petitioner for a recount to select the method for conducting the recount; limiting the methods from which the selection must be made; requiring a local board of elections to preserve and store certain voter-verifiable paper records and conduct a recount in a certain manner ~~and count duplicate ballots in a manual recount after a certain review~~; and generally relating to recount procedures.

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
 Article – Election Law  
 Section 9–102(a)  
 Annotated Code of Maryland  
 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

BY adding to  
 Article – Election Law  
 Section 12–108  
 Annotated Code of Maryland  
 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

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

**Article – Election Law**

9–102.

(a) In this section, a “voter-verifiable paper record” includes:

- (1) a paper ballot prepared by the voter for the purpose of being read by a precinct-based optical scanner;
- (2) a paper ballot prepared by the voter to be mailed to the applicable local board, whether mailed from a domestic or an overseas location; and
- (3) a paper ballot created through the use of a ballot marking device.

12–108.

**(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.**

**(2) “DUPLICATE BALLOT” MEANS A PAPER BALLOT THAT:**

**(I) IS CREATED BY A LOCAL BOARD FOR PURPOSES OF VOTE TABULATION BY AN OPTICAL SCANNER BECAUSE THE VOTER–VERIFIABLE PAPER RECORD SUBMITTED BY THE VOTER IS NOT ACCEPTABLE FOR VOTE TABULATION BY AN OPTICAL SCANNER; AND**

**(II) IS A COPY OF A VOTER–VERIFIABLE PAPER RECORD THAT:**

**1. FOR AN ABSENTEE BALLOT RETURNED BY MAIL, REFLECTS THE INTENT OF THE VOTER; OR**

**2. FOR A PROVISIONAL BALLOT, INCLUDES ONLY THE VOTES FOR CONTESTS FOR WHICH THE VOTER IS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE.**

**(3) “VOTER–VERIFIABLE PAPER RECORD” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9–102 OF THIS ARTICLE.**

**(B) (1) IN A RECOUNT UNDER THIS SUBTITLE, SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE PETITIONER SHALL SELECT THE METHOD FOR CONDUCTING THE RECOUNT.**

**(2) THE PETITIONER MAY SELECT ONLY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING METHODS:**

**(I) RESCANNING THE BALLOTS USING:**

**1. THE SAME VOTE TABULATING EQUIPMENT THAT WAS USED IN THE ELECTION; OR**

**2. ALTERNATIVE VOTE TABULATING EQUIPMENT, IF ALTERNATIVE EQUIPMENT IS AVAILABLE AND ITS USE IS FEASIBLE, AS DETERMINED BY THE STATE BOARD;**

**(II) A MANUAL RECOUNT OF VOTER–VERIFIABLE PAPER RECORDS; OR**

**(III) ANY OTHER RECOUNT METHOD APPROVED BY THE STATE ADMINISTRATOR.**

**(C) A LOCAL BOARD SHALL:**

**(1) PRESERVE THE VOTER-VERIFIABLE PAPER RECORD CORRESPONDING TO EACH DUPLICATE BALLOT THAT IS CREATED; AND**

**(2) STORE EACH DUPLICATE BALLOT THAT IS CREATED TOGETHER WITH THE CORRESPONDING VOTER-VERIFIABLE PAPER RECORD; AND**

**~~(3) IN A MANUAL RECOUNT UNDER THIS SUBTITLE, COUNT THE DUPLICATE BALLOT AFTER REVIEW OF THE VOTER-VERIFIABLE PAPER RECORD.~~**

**(D) IN A RECOUNT UNDER THIS SUBTITLE, A LOCAL BOARD SHALL:**

**(1) EXAMINE THE VOTER-VERIFIABLE PAPER RECORD AND DUPLICATE BALLOT; AND**

**(2) (I) IF THE VOTER-VERIFIABLE PAPER RECORD AND DUPLICATE BALLOT DO NOT MATCH, CREATE A NEW DUPLICATE BALLOT THAT ACCURATELY REFLECTS THE VOTER'S INTENT AND COUNT THAT DUPLICATE BALLOT; OR**

**(II) IF THE VOTER-VERIFIABLE PAPER RECORD AND DUPLICATE BALLOT MATCH, COUNT THE DUPLICATE BALLOT.**

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act is an emergency measure, is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health or safety, has been passed by a yea and nay vote supported by three-fifths of all the members elected to each of the two Houses of the General Assembly, and shall take effect from the date it is enacted.

**Approved by the Governor, April 25, 2024.**