HOUSE BILL 67

G1 5lr1514 HB 202/24 – W&M (PRE-FILED) By: Delegates R. Long, Arentz, Beauchamp, Chisholm, Grammer, Hartman, Hornberger, Miller, T. Morgan, Rose, and Tomlinson Requested: October 30, 2024 Introduced and read first time: January 8, 2025 Assigned to: Ways and Means A BILL ENTITLED AN ACT concerning Election Law - Absentee Ballots - Signature Requirements and Verification FOR the purpose of prohibiting a local board of elections from removing an absentee ballot from a return envelope or ballot/return envelope or counting the ballot unless the return envelope or ballot/return envelope is signed by the voter and, except under certain circumstances, a witness and the local board verify the voter's signature; and generally relating to absentee ballots. BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments, Article – Election Law Section 9–303 and 9–310(a)(5) and (c) Annotated Code of Maryland (2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement) BY adding to Article – Election Law Section 9–310.1 Annotated Code of Maryland (2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement) SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows: Article - Election Law 9-303.

The State Board shall establish guidelines for the administration of absentee

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

voting by the local boards.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15 16

17

18 19

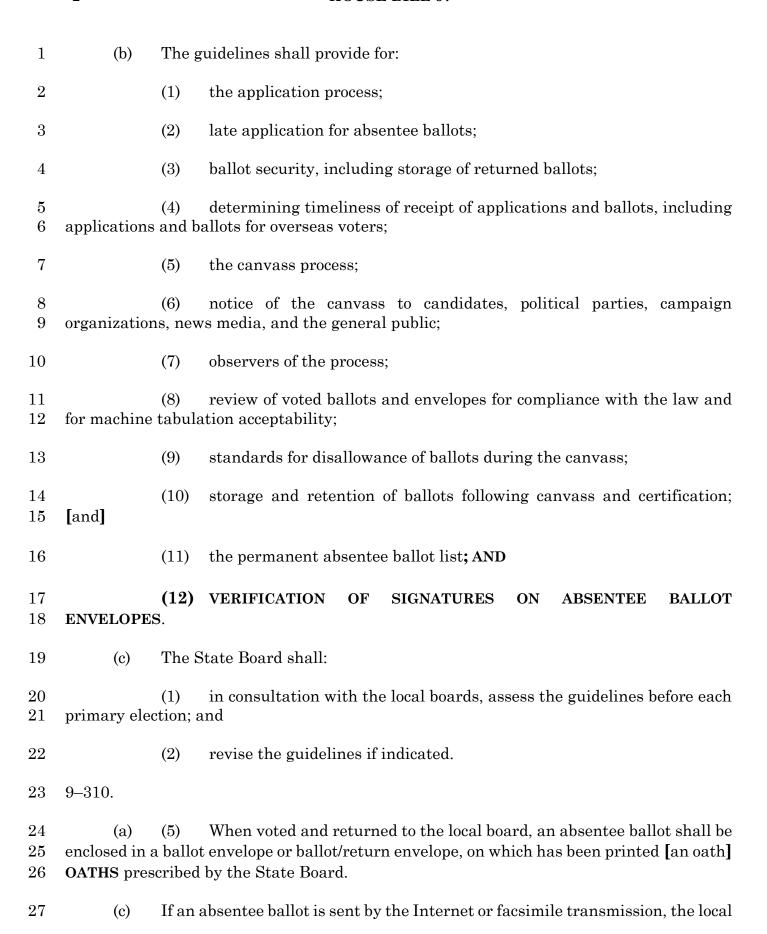
20

21

22

23





- 1 board shall provide the voter with an envelope template, the [oath] OATHS prescribed by
- 2 the State Board, and instructions for marking and returning the absentee ballot.
- **3 9–310.1.**
- 4 (A) IN THIS SECTION, "UNIFORMED SERVICES" HAS THE MEANING STATED 5 IN 10 U.S.C. § 101.
- 6 (B) A LOCAL BOARD MAY NOT REMOVE AN ABSENTEE BALLOT FROM THE 7 RETURN ENVELOPE OR BALLOT/RETURN ENVELOPE OR COUNT THE BALLOT 8 UNLESS:
- 9 (1) THE RETURN ENVELOPE OR BALLOT/RETURN ENVELOPE IS 10 SIGNED BY:
- 11 (I) THE VOTER TO WHOM THE BALLOT WAS ISSUED; AND
- 12 (II) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION,
- 13 A WITNESS OTHER THAN THE VOTER TO WHOM THE BALLOT WAS ISSUED; AND
- 14 (2) THE VOTER'S SIGNATURE IS VERIFIED AS PROVIDED IN 15 SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION.
- 16 (C) THE WITNESS SIGNATURE REQUIREMENT UNDER SUBSECTION (B)(1)(II)
- 17 OF THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO AN ABSENTEE BALLOT THAT IS VOTED AND
- 18 **RETURNED BY:**
- 19 (1) AN ACTIVE DUTY MEMBER OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES WHO IS 20 SERVING OVERSEAS; OR
- 21 (2) THE SPOUSE OR DEPENDENT OF AN ACTIVE DUTY MEMBER OF THE
- 22 UNIFORMED SERVICES WHO IS SERVING OVERSEAS IF THE SPOUSE OR DEPENDENT
- 23 LIVES OVERSEAS.
- 24 (D) EACH LOCAL BOARD SHALL VERIFY THE SIGNATURE OF THE VOTER ON
- 25 THE RETURN ENVELOPE OR BALLOT/RETURN ENVELOPE BY COMPARING THE
- 26 SIGNATURE WITH THE VOTER'S REGISTRATION RECORD IN ACCORDANCE WITH
- 27 REGULATIONS ADOPTED BY THE STATE BOARD.
- SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
- 29 October 1, 2025.