

SENATE BILL 257

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(PRE-FILED)

5lr0169
CF HB 199

By: **Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee (By Request – Departmental – State Board of Elections)**

Requested: September 18, 2024

Introduced and read first time: January 8, 2025

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Committee Report: Favorable

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: February 11, 2025

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Election Law – Notice to Permanent Absentee Voters**

3 FOR the purpose of altering the time before an election when a certain notice is required
4 to be sent to each voter who is on the permanent absentee ballot list; repealing a
5 requirement that the notice be sent to each voter who is on the permanent absentee
6 ballot list as of a certain date; altering the action the State Board of Elections is
7 required to take if the State Board is unable to contact a voter who is on the
8 permanent absentee ballot list using the method of communication chosen by the
9 voter; and generally relating to permanent absentee voters.

10 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
11 Article – Election Law
12 Section 9–311.1(d)
13 Annotated Code of Maryland
14 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

15 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
16 Article – Election Law
17 Section 9–311.1(g)
18 Annotated Code of Maryland
19 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

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

3 **Article – Election Law**

4 9–311.1.

5 (d) A voter shall specify in an absentee ballot application submitted in accordance
6 with subsection (b) of this section:

7 (1) one of the following methods by which the voter chooses to receive an
8 absentee ballot:

9 (i) mail;

10 (ii) facsimile transmission; or

11 (iii) the Internet; and

12 (2) one of the following methods by which the voter chooses to be contacted
13 by the State Board under subsection (g) of this section before each election:

14 (i) nonforwardable mail;

15 (ii) e-mail; or

16 (iii) text message.

17 (g) (1) **[Not less than 75] DURING THE PERIOD BEGINNING 120 DAYS**
18 **BEFORE AN ELECTION AND ENDING 90** days before [the day on which a local board begins
19 to send absentee ballots to voters] **THE ELECTION**, the State Board shall send a written
20 communication to each voter who is on the permanent absentee ballot list [as of a date that
21 is at least 90 days before the upcoming election] using the method chosen by the voter
22 under subsection (d)(2) of this section.

23 (2) The communication required under paragraph (1) of this subsection
24 shall include:

25 (i) confirmation that the voter is included on the permanent
26 absentee ballot list;

27 (ii) the address of the voter;

28 (iii) the method by which the voter has chosen to receive an absentee
29 ballot; and

1 (iv) a statement that the voter must notify the local board if any of
2 the changes listed in subsection (j) of this section have occurred.

3 (3) If the State Board is unable to contact a voter using the method of
4 communication chosen by the voter under subsection (d)(2) of this section, the State Board
5 shall [send the written communication] **ATTEMPT TO CONTACT THE VOTER** using
6 another method [if the State Board has other contact information for the voter].

7 (4) If the communication required under paragraph (1) of this subsection
8 is sent by mail, the envelope shall include a statement, prominently placed, requesting that
9 the recipient return the communication to the State Board if the intended recipient no
10 longer lives at that address.

11 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that this Act shall take effect July
12 1, 2025.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.