

SENATE BILL 929

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CF HB 1097

By: **Senators Brooks, West, and Muse**

Introduced and read first time: January 28, 2025

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted with floor amendments

Read second time: February 23, 2025

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Workgroup on Mail-In Ballot Accessibility**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Workgroup on Mail-In Ballot Accessibility; and
4 generally relating to the Workgroup on Mail-In Ballot Accessibility.

5 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
6 That:

7 (a) There is a Workgroup on Mail-In Ballot Accessibility.

8 (b) The Workgroup consists of the following members:

9 (1) one member of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President of
10 the Senate;

11 (2) one member of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of the
12 House;

13 (3) the State Administrator of Elections, or the State Administrator's
14 designee;

15 (4) the Secretary of Information Technology, or the Secretary's designee;

16 (5) the Secretary of Disabilities, or the Secretary's designee; ~~and~~

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 (6) the Director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security, or the
 2 Director's designee;

3 (7) the State Chief Information Security Officer, or the Officer's designee;

4 (8) the Executive Director of the Cybersecurity Association of Maryland, or
 5 the Executive Director's designee;

6 (9) the Director of Computer Science at the University of Maryland,
 7 Baltimore County, or the Director's designee;

8 (10) the Executive Director of the Maryland Developmental Disabilities
 9 Council, or the Executive Director's designee;

10 ~~(7)~~ (11) the President of the Maryland Association of Election Officials,
 11 or the President's designee; and

12 ~~(6)~~ ~~(8)~~ (12) the following members, appointed by the Governor:

13 (i) one representative of Common Cause Maryland;

14 (ii) one representative of the League of Women Voters of Maryland;

15 (iii) one representative of the National Federation of the Blind,
 16 Maryland;

17 (iv) one representative of the Arc of Maryland;

18 (v) ~~one representative of the Maryland Developmental Disabilities~~
 19 ~~Council~~ multilingual individual with expertise in election administration;

20 (vi) one representative of Disability Rights Maryland;

21 (vii) one representative of the Association of the Deaf;

22 ~~(vi)~~ (viii) an expert in voting accessibility;

23 ~~(vii)~~ (ix) an expert in election security; and

24 ~~(viii)~~ (x) an expert in cybersecurity.

25 (c) The Governor shall designate the chair of the Workgroup.

26 (d) The State Board of Elections shall provide staff for the Workgroup.

27 (e) A member of the Workgroup:

1 (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Workgroup; but

2 (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State
3 Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

4 (f) The Workgroup shall:

5 (1) examine the current processes and procedures in the State relating to
6 mail-in ballot return, including the administrative time and costs, ballot return rates, and
7 security issues;

8 (2) assess the impact on voters with disabilities of requiring mail-in ballots
9 to be returned in paper form;

10 (3) collect information about current practices and standards for accessible
11 alternatives to paper mail-in ballot return in other jurisdictions;

12 (4) evaluate alternatives to paper mail-in ballot return for individuals with
13 disabilities, including each of the following considerations:

14 (i) accessibility;

15 (ii) security, including options for mitigating security concerns;

16 (iii) the potential for discrimination against voters with disabilities;

17 (iv) the ability of voters with disabilities to vote privately and
18 independently; and

19 (v) the cost and feasibility of implementation; and

20 (5) consult with additional subject matter experts as needed.

21 (g) The Workgroup shall consult with the federal National Institute of Standards
22 and Technology in considering cybersecurity issues related to the work of the Workgroup
23 under subsection (f) of this section.

24 ~~(g)~~ (h) On or before December 31, 2025, the Workgroup shall report its findings and
25 recommendations, including any recommended statutory changes, to the Governor and, in
26 accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

27 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June
28 1, 2025. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the end of June
29 30, 2026, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be
30 abrogated and of no further force and effect.