

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2026 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 845 (Senator Carozza)  
Education, Energy, and the Environment

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**Maryland Voter Registration List Accuracy and Integrity Act**

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This bill requires a local election director to immediately remove a registered voter from the statewide voter registration list upon receipt of a report (from one of several specified sources) of the voter's death, largely replacing existing requirements that the election director send notice to the voter's address and (1) under certain circumstances, allow two weeks to pass before the voter is removed from the statewide voter registration list if no objection is raised and (2) in others, wait for verification of the voter's death to be received in response to the notice before the voter is removed. Under the bill, if information is later received (after the removal) that the voter is not deceased, the voter must be restored to the statewide voter registration list or the matter must be referred to the local board of elections for a hearing to determine the individual's voter registration status. The bill gives the State Board of Elections (SBE) specified responsibility and authority to ensure local boards comply with the bill's removal requirement. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2026.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill can be implemented by SBE with existing resources, as discussed below.

**Local Effect:** Local government expenditures increase, collectively, by approximately \$150,000 in FY 2027 only. Revenues are not affected. **This bill may impose a mandate on a unit of local government.**

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

### **Bill Summary:**

#### *Removal of Deceased Voters from the Statewide Voter Registration List*

The bill replaces a process that requires a local election director to mail a notice to the address of a voter for whom Social Security Administration (SSA) information indicates they are deceased, and allow two weeks for the registered voter or a representative to object and show cause (why the removal should not proceed) before removal, with a requirement that the election director immediately remove a registered voter from the statewide voter registration list upon receiving a report of death from (1) SSA; (2) the Maryland Department of Health (MDH); or (1) the official vital statistics agency of another state or territory of the United States.

#### *Restoration of Removed Voter*

If a local election director receives information that a voter removed from the statewide voter registration list is not in fact deceased, the election director must (1) restore the voter to the statewide voter registration list or (2) refer the matter to the local board for a hearing to determine the individual's voter registration status.

#### *State Board of Elections Oversight and Enforcement*

If SBE determines that a local board is not in compliance with the bill's requirement to remove deceased registered voters, SBE must (1) issue written findings of noncompliance; (2) require the local board to develop a corrective action plan with deadlines for compliance; and (3) monitor the local board's implementation of the corrective action plan until the local board is in compliance.

If a local board fails to substantially comply with the bill's requirement for a period of more than two months, SBE may (1) withhold discretionary election administration funds until the local board is in compliance; (2) require mandatory retraining of local board staff; and (3) refer a local board that is persistently noncompliant to the Office of Legislative Audits.

### **Current Law:**

#### *Reports of Deceased Voters*

The State Administrator of Elections must make arrangements with SSA, or an entity that receives information from SSA and is approved by the State Administrator, to receive

reports of names and addresses, if available, of all Maryland residents at least age 16 who are reported deceased. In addition, MDH must report to the State Administrator the names and residence addresses, if known, of all individuals at least age 16 reported deceased within the State, in a format and at times prescribed by SBE. The State Administrator must transmit this information to the appropriate local boards of elections.

### *Social Security Administration Reports*

Whenever a local board receives SSA information on reported deceased residents, from the State Administrator, that includes a registered voter, a notice must be mailed by the election director to the voter's address on the statewide voter registration list (1) stating that the registered voter has been reported by SSA to have died; (2) notifying the registered voter or person attending to their affairs that the voter will be removed from the statewide voter registration list unless, within two weeks after the date of the letter, the registered voter or a representative objects to the removal and shows cause why the removal should not proceed.

If the registered voter or a representative, within two weeks, objects and shows cause why the removal should not proceed, the election director may (1) terminate the removal process and retain the registered voter on the statewide voter registration list or (2) refer the matter to the local board for a hearing to determine the registered voter's status. If the registered voter or a representative does not object and show cause why the removal should not proceed, the registration is canceled and the registered voter is removed from the statewide voter registration list.

### *Other Reports*

Aside from SSA information, whenever a local board becomes aware of an obituary or any other reliable report of the death of a registered voter, the election director must mail a notice to the registered voter, as prescribed by SBE, to verify whether the voter is in fact deceased. On receipt of a verification of the death of a voter, provided in accordance with the notice, the election director may remove the voter from the statewide voter registration list.

**State Fiscal Effect:** SBE indicates that it needs an additional staff auditor to monitor local boards' compliance with the bill; however, the bill does not explicitly require ongoing monitoring of local boards' implementation of the bill's requirements, only that SBE take action if it determines a local board is not complying with the bill's requirements. Presumably, this would occur in the course of SBE's existing oversight of local boards' statewide voter registration list maintenance efforts. This analysis, therefore, assumes SBE can implement the bill with existing resources.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** Local government expenditures increase, collectively, by approximately \$150,000 in fiscal 2027 only – based on preliminary information provided by SBE – for one-time development costs to make modifications in the statewide voter registration system to allow for implementation of the revised process under the bill for removal of registered voters upon receipt of information on deceased residents of the State. The costs are billed to the local boards of elections by SBE, in accordance with the State’s current cost-sharing structure with the local boards.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Harford County; Maryland State Board of Elections; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 1, 2026  
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