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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB33: Election Law - Voting by Absentee Ballot - Prepaid Postage for Return of Ballots
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Hearing: January 22, 2020, 1:00 PM EHEA

More than 150,000 Maryland cast absentee ballots in 2018. They were instructed to place sufficient postage on their ballot in order for it to be delivered. The price of stamps can be a burden on Maryland's most vulnerable residents who wish to vote. Purchasing stamps is a barrier for young voters who are frequently inexperienced with mailing requirements. People who are sick, elderly, or imprisoned still have the right to vote, but they may not have access to stamps.

There is no fee to vote in-person to cover the costs of administering an election. By removing postage as an obstacle to voting, citizens will be able to more freely participate in our electoral system.

This legislation is based on then-Senator Jamie Raskin's bill that passed the Senate unanimously in 2015. He argued that, "given the affected population and low cost of the bill, this is something the State could become a national leader in." This bill was also introduced in 2019 as SB343, which was supported by this Committee and the full Senate.

SB33 would require absentee ballots to include prepaid return envelopes. This year's fiscal note estimated an insignificant statewide cost of \$14,000 in FY22 (roughly .00003% of the State budget). This is a small price to pay in order to increase participation in our democracy.

I urge the Committee to favorably report again on this SB33.

Attachment: 2016 and 2018 Absentee Ballots Returned by County

SB33: Absentee Ballots Received in 2016 and 2018

2016 Election		
Counties	Number received	Share of total
Allegany	1,540	0.87%
Anne Arundel	16,422	9.26%
Baltimore City	12,292	6.93%
Baltimore County	21,475	12.11%
Calvert	2,641	1.49%
Caroline	486	0.27%
Carroll	4,499	2.54%
Cecil	1,941	1.09%
Charles	3,379	1.91%
Dorchester	889	0.50%
Frederick	6,543	3.69%
Garrett	780	0.44%
Harford	5,633	3.18%
Howard	10,088	5.69%
Kent	574	0.32%
Montgomery County	51,382	28.97%
Prince George's	23,034	12.99%
Queen Anne's	1,283	0.72%
Saint Mary's	3,006	1.69%
Somerset	421	0.24%
Talbot	1,357	0.77%
Washington	3,233	1.82%
Wicomico	2,421	1.37%
Worcester	2,031	1.15%
Statewide	177,350	

2018 Election		
Counties	Number received	Share of total
Allegany	1,770	1.17%
Anne Arundel	13,744	9.12%
Baltimore City	10,382	6.89%
Baltimore County	17,344	11.51%
Calvert	2,504	1.66%
Caroline	438	0.29%
Carroll	3,353	2.23%
Cecil	1,488	0.99%
Charles	2,494	1.66%
Dorchester	867	0.58%
Frederick	6,260	4.16%
Garrett	740	0.49%
Harford	4,036	2.68%
Howard	7,885	5.23%
Kent	506	0.34%
Montgomery County	48,150	31.96%
Prince George's	16,757	11.12%
Queen Anne's	1,017	0.68%
Saint Mary's	2,273	1.51%
Somerset	413	0.27%
Talbot	1,230	0.82%
Washington	3,466	2.30%
Wicomico	1,929	1.28%
Worcester	1,593	1.06%
Statewide	150,639	