



# MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

7 School Street • Annapolis, Maryland 21401-2096

Balto. (410) 269-1940 • Fax (410) 280-2956

*President*  
Donna S. Edwards

*Secretary-Treasurer*  
Gerald W. Jackson

**HB 51 – Election Law – Individuals Released from Correctional Facilities – Voter  
Registration  
House Ways and Means Committee  
February 16, 2020**

**SUPPORT**

**Donna S. Edwards  
President  
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 51 – Election Law – Individuals Released from Correctional Facilities – Voter Registration. My name is Donna S. Edwards and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

Maryland enfranchised ex-felons by passing HB 980 – Election Law – Voting Rights – Ex-Felons, in 2016, allowing all ex-felons the opportunity to register and vote in our elections.

With HB 51 we have the opportunity to pro-actively offer ex-offenders a voter registration form and instruct them that, upon their release from a correctional facility after serving their time, they have the right to vote and must register to do so. This is an important step in re-acclimating to society, and it's a communication from the State to ex-offenders that they are citizens, and can enjoy all of the rights and responsibilities that citizenship confers.

**For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 51**