



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Office of the Secretary

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BILL: HOUSE BILL 51

POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION

EXPLANATION: This bill, among other things, would require the Maryland Division of Correction (DOC) to provide an inmate who has completed a sentence of imprisonment for a felony conviction with a voter registration form before releasing the inmate; requiring a correctional facility to provide the inmate with certain information concerning the inmate's voting rights and voter registration requirements before releasing the inmate; defining certain terms; and generally relating to voter registration and individuals released from correctional facilities.

COMMENTS:

- The Department's Division of Correction (DOC) operates approximately 17 State correctional facilities, which house offenders sentenced to incarceration for 18 months and longer. The Department also runs the Baltimore City Jail, which houses pretrial detainees and inmates sentenced to incarceration for 18 months and less.
- The Department implemented an Inmate Voting Rights and Procedures policy that is aligned with Election Law Article, § 3-102, Annotated Code of Maryland in September 2019.
- This bill requires the designated Department's personnel to provide inmates with voter registration forms before the inmate is released.
- Under existing policy, notices are posted in inmate housing and recreation areas to advise inmates of voter eligibility requirements, right to request an absentee ballot or voter registration application, and deadlines for returning applications and absentee ballots to the local election board.
- Inmates who meet the eligibility requirements but are not registered to vote may request and receive a Maryland Voter Registration Application.
 - Maryland Application for Absentee Ballot and the Voter Registration Application are available for visually impaired inmates in the large type format provided by the State Board of Elections.

- Maryland Application for Absentee Ballot and the Voter Registration Application are available in Spanish versions.

CONCLUSION: For these reasons, the Department respectfully requests this Committee consider this information as it deliberates on House Bill 51