



Maryland Indivisible Coalition

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SUPPORT HB 568

**Election Law – Correctional Facilities – Voter Registration and Voting
Hearing of the House Ways and Means Committee
February 11, 2020**

The Maryland Indivisible Coalition is a network of grassroots groups from across the State of Maryland representing thousands of engaged progressive voters and dedicated to protecting progressive and democratic values threatened by President Trump. **The Maryland Indivisible Coalition strongly supports HB 568**, which would make voting more accessible for currently and formerly incarcerated citizens who have the right to vote in Maryland.

Incarcerated citizens who have the right to vote face special difficulties in exercising that right. Marylanders serving time for a misdemeanor conviction, and those in pretrial detention (who have not been convicted of anything), have the right to vote. Even if these people are registered to vote, they cannot vote in person due to their incarceration. If the State of Maryland does not facilitate the acquisition and return of voter registration forms and absentee ballots, it is de facto disenfranchising these voters. HB 568 will help ensure that these citizens' right to vote exists in reality and not just on paper.

Incarcerated citizens who have the right to vote may not realize they have that right. While canvassing over the past three years, Indivisible members across Maryland have regularly encountered people who mistakenly believe they do not have the right to vote because of a previous conviction. HB 568 would help educate citizens about their voting rights.

HB 568 builds on the General Assembly's extension of voting rights to returning citizens on parole and probation. HB 568 is a much more modest reform that will make the right to vote more meaningful for those who are incarcerated but retain that fundamental right. It will also inform returning citizens of the voting rights that the General Assembly restored in 2016.

We have a moral obligation to make it as easy as possible for all eligible voters to exercise their franchise. HB 568 would bring us one step closer to meeting that obligation.

For these reasons, the Maryland Indivisible Coalition **SUPPORTS HB 568**. A full list of affiliates is attached. With questions, please call Alexandra Neuhaus-Follini at 410-693-3795.

Affiliated Organizations, Supporters, Signatories

1. Anne Arundel County Indivisible (Anne Arundel County)
2. WISE (Women Indivisible Strong Effective) (Anne Arundel County)
3. Indivisible Baltimore (Baltimore City)
4. Indivisible Catonsville (Baltimore County)
5. Indivisible Towson (Baltimore County)
6. Indivisible Howard County (Howard County)
7. Kent and Queen Anne's Indivisible (Kent County/Queen Anne's County)
8. Glen Echo Heights Mobilization (Montgomery County)
9. Indivisible Cabin John (Montgomery County)
10. Indivisible MoCo (Montgomery County)
11. Indivisible Montgomery (Montgomery County)
12. Indivisible Worcester Maryland (Worcester County)