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Testimony in Support of HB859 – Election Law - Absentee Ballot Requests, Delivery and Marking

HB859 represents an attempt to mitigate the security vulnerabilities within Maryland's absentee voting system.

The legislation restricts online absentee ballot delivery to only uniformed voters, overseas voters, voters with disabilities, or any other voters who would be unable to vote if they could not receive an absentee ballot electronically.

Ballots delivered online:

- Create huge security vulnerabilities in our elections;
- Are much more difficult and expensive for election officials to process; and
- Are far less likely to be voted on and returned than absentee ballots sent by mail (30% of voters who requested an online ballot in November 2018 did not use them).

Additionally, many voters who have their ballots delivered online don't realize that someone at their local board of elections will have to hand-copy their votes onto a real ballot to be counted, and the voter will never see that ballot. In that process, the secrecy of their ballot may be compromised.

HB859 will reduce these risks associated with the online delivery of absentee ballots and preserve the secrecy of a voter's ballot. It also will ensure that anyone who needs to receive their absentee ballot online will still be able to do so.

I respectfully ask for a favorable report on HB859.