



TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

SB 683 – Election Law – Permanent Absentee Ballot List

POSITION: Favorable

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The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influence public policy through education and advocacy. **We support SB683 because we support the use of a permanent absentee ballot list that gives voters the choice to receive their ballot in the mail on an ongoing basis.**

The 2020 General Election demonstrated that expanded absentee voting is feasible and acceptable to voters. Approximately 50 percent of voters—in a year of high turnout—voted by absentee (mail-in) ballot. Voters effectively followed instructions and according to the State Board of Elections (SBE), only 0.24% of mail-in ballots were rejected. Furthermore, for the more than 1.5 million voters who used mail-in voting in the fall of 2020, the SBE has a good start on updating the voter registration list, a common concern voiced about ballots by mail. And although it is called “permanent,” voters would be able to remove themselves from the list should their circumstances or preferences change.

While absentee voting can be a convenience for many voters, it particularly benefits voters with transportation problems or disabilities as well as parents and other caretakers. Voters are not restricted to voting only during the hours a precinct or voting center is open so voting need not interfere with anybody’s work schedule, whether it’s someone working multiple jobs or a senior executive.

The LWVMD, representing 1500+ concerned citizens throughout Maryland, urges a favorable report on SB683.