



Get Money Out – Maryland

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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
IN SUPPORT OF SB 29 – ELECTION LAW – ELECTIONS BY MAIL,
POLLING PLACES AND EARLY VOTING CENTERS**

February 4, 2021

Get Money Out (GMOM) is an all-volunteer organization established eight years ago. We want all citizens to have equal access to the ballot and an equal say in governance. Through our grassroots actions, we have signed up over 9,000 supporters.

Under SB 29 every citizen who is registered to vote would be sent a vote-by-mail ballot. One of our key goals at GMOM is to increase access to voting. Currently, if a voter wants to vote-by-mail, they must apply to receive a ballot. This application process is an added hurdle that many citizens simply do not know how to apply and access. In turn, this hinders the ability of various groups to vote – particularly the elderly.

One needs to look no further than a comparison of the 2016 and 2020 election cycles to see the positive effects of increased access to mail-in-ballots. In 2016, voter turnout was about 60% whereas in 2020 it increased to 66%. This increase represents more than 20 million more people voting in this country. Maryland also saw an increase of about 71% to 74%. An increase in participation did not just come in the national election but also primary elections across numerous states. By looking at the data it is simple to conclude that vote-by-mail ballots increased national participation in the elections.

The pandemic was not the main reason people voted by mail. Pew Research found that 66 percent of people choose their method of voting by what they found to be most **convenient**. That almost triples the 24% who decided their method of voting because of concern for the virus. It is no surprise that what people want is the easiest possible way to vote. Thus, if Maryland would remove its required application to vote-by-mail it would provide more convenience to voters and would result in more access to voting for every citizen. The added cost should be very low because we already mail every voter a sample ballot.

We believe in decreasing barriers to vote for every citizen. Due to this, we ask for a favorable report on SB 29