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March 3, 2021

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Hannibal G. Williams II Kemerer  
Chief Counsel, Legislative Affairs, The Office of the Attorney General

RE: SB0838 – Election Law – Polling Places – Proof of Identity – **Letter of  
Opposition**

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The Office of Attorney General (the “OAG”) urges this Committee to unfavorably report SB 838.

Senate Bill 838 seeks to require election judges to establish a voter’s identity and verify the voter’s address prior to permitting the voter to cast a regular ballot. Voter ID requirements have historically served to disenfranchise the elderly, people of limited means, and people of color.<sup>1</sup> Maryland law should seek to expand the franchise to as many eligible citizens as possible, not to constrict the franchise to only those individuals with ID and proof of address.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General urges an unfavorable report on SB 838.

cc: Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Senators Ready, Bailey, Corderman, Eckardt, Edwards, Gallion, Hershey, Hough,  
Jennings, Salling, Simonaire, and West

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<sup>1</sup> Sari Horwitz, Getting a Photo ID So You Can Vote is Easy. Unless You’re Poor, Black, Latino or Elderly, Wash. Post (May 23, 2016), available online at: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/courts\\_law/getting-a-photo-id-so-you-can-vote-is-easy-unless-youre-poor-black-latino-or-elderly/2016/05/23/8d5474ec-20f0-11e6-8690-f14ca9de2972\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/courts_law/getting-a-photo-id-so-you-can-vote-is-easy-unless-youre-poor-black-latino-or-elderly/2016/05/23/8d5474ec-20f0-11e6-8690-f14ca9de2972_story.html) (last visited Mar. 1, 2021); *see also*, Issie Lapowsky, A Dead-Simple Algorithm Reveals the True Toll of Voter ID Laws, Wired (Jan. 4, 2018), available online at: [https://www.wired.com/story/voter-id-law-algorithm/?utm\\_medium=twitter&utm\\_source=divr.it](https://www.wired.com/story/voter-id-law-algorithm/?utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=divr.it) (last visited Mar. 1, 2021).