



# Indivisible: Central Maryland

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## **SB 029\_ Election Law – Voting – Elections by Mail, Polling Places, and Early Voting Centers. Indivisible Central Maryland\_Enagonio Liz\_SUPPORT .**

Indivisible Central Maryland SUPPORTS SB0029, We believe that voting is a right and a responsibility of citizenship. We support every effort to enfranchise all citizens eligible to vote by making it as easy as possible to cast a ballot in every election. We believe that no-excuses vote by mail is a valuable tool for enfranchising Maryland voters.

According to Tom Ridge, who served as the Homeland Security secretary under George W. Bush and now chairs the bipartisan group VoteSafe, "The June 2 [2020] primaries proved what we already knew – access to absentee ballots increases voter turnout. That's especially good news for someone like me who does not believe voting is a privilege, but rather a responsibility of citizenship. Voters should have options to demonstrate that responsibility safely and securely during this pandemic." (The Hill)

A report called [America Goes To The Polls 2018](#) from the nonprofit *Vote and the U.S. Elections Project*, found the following:

- Three of the four Vote at Home States – Colorado, Oregon, and Washington – ranked in the top 10 in turnout. These states send all registered voters their ballot two or more weeks in advance and provide secure and convenient options to return it.
- Utah, the fourth and newest state to implement Vote at Home statewide, led the nation in voter turnout growth over 2014.
- In the 2018 primaries, turnout in vote at home states outperformed states with traditional poll-based voting by 15.5 percentage points.

We especially support the provision in SB that will require Maryland to mail a ballot to every registered voter. In the 2020 Primary, not all states saw an increase in turnout. Indiana, which allowed anyone to vote by mail but did not mail applications to every voter, saw a dip in turnout. Turnout in Washington D.C., which also did not mail applications to every voter and struggled to get absentee ballots out in time, only saw a 1% increase in turnout.

For safety, reliability and ease of access to the vote in all elections large or small, we are requesting the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee to vote to **SUPPORT SB0029**.

Liz Enagonio, advocate, on behalf of Indivisible Central Maryland

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