

Education, Health & Environmental Affairs
SB0029 Election Law- Voting- Elections By Mail, Polling Places, and Early Voting Centers
February 4, 2021
Support

Dear Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Members,

On behalf of the approximately 1,400 members of the Baltimore Francis “Stu” Filbey Area Local #181 of the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO (APWU BFSFAL #181) we write in support of SB0029, Election Law- Voting- Elections by Mail, Polling Places, and Early Voting Centers---- requiring each local elections board to send a vote by mail ballot to each registered voter in the state, under certain requirements and other regulations; while expanding access to the polls through early voting and ensure the proper amount of polling locations for voters across the state.

The members of APWU BFSFAL #181 are postal workers trained with the expertise and integrity of safely and efficiently handling political and election mail. The significance of that expertise and integrity on full display during the current public health crisis-- as thousands of postal workers processed millions of pieces of election mail for the primary and general elections of 2020. The past election cycle saw high voter turnout, with approximately 37% of eligible voters in Maryland requesting a ballot through the mail. Removing the requirement that eligible voters have to request an absentee ballot increases access to the ballot.

The United States Postal Service is rated as the most trusted government agency by the public and that is in large part due to the dedication of the workforce. Postal workers have been processing and delivering election mail for decades with many states in the country offering some form of vote by mail. Colorado, Hawaii, Utah, and Washington are states with all mail elections.

SB0029 guarantees expanded access to the ballot while allowing the USPS to provide vital and necessary services for generations to come. The impact of this bill on communities in Maryland would make voting more secure and accessible to millions of Marylanders that find it difficult to make time to participate in the electoral process. This is especially important for the elderly, young, working people, and those who live at or below the poverty line.

While our democracy was tested postal workers helped ensure the most fundamental right we have as citizens was protected and we welcome the opportunity to expand the services we provide by handling election ballots.

For these reasons APWU BFSFAL #181 supports SB0029.

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney L. Jenkins, APWU #181 Legislative Director