



TESTIMONY FOR SB0747
**STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS – MEMBERSHIP, CONTRACT MANAGEMENT,
BALLOT DROP BOXES, AND VOTING SYSTEM FINANCING**

Bill Sponsor: Senator Kagan

Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0747 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The State Board of Elections, like any successful organization, should have people who have a solid background in all of the functions required by the organization. This bill will expand the State Board of Elections by two members and ensure that those two members come from both small and large counties. However, it also requires that the members of the board have expertise in procurement, cyber security, advocating for persons with disabilities, and advancing diversity and inclusion. These are functions of the board that are key to its success and we applaud the stipulation that the board have this kind of experience.

The bill also requires that the board review and vote on any contract greater than \$500,000. This is an important requirement that ensures that purchases made by the board have the appropriate scrutiny.

We would like to see the language changed so that it covers purchases that in aggregate exceed \$500,000.

In terms of financing, the bill also specifies that the board, when communicating to the Board of Public Works, does not classify the funding as using 'special funds'. We like the transparency of knowing where, exactly, the funding will come from.

Finally, there is language in the bill that discusses drop boxes and the fact that only persons who are authorized by a local Board of Elections can remove the ballots from a drop box. We assume that this is codifying a practice that already exists. If it does not, it is critical to know that only authorized persons can remove ballots from a drop box. **We would like to see the language changed to specify a penalty for unauthorized removal of ballots.**

The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report in committee.