



# Maryland Association of Election Officials

## Representing the Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland

February 19, 2021

Delegate Anne Kaiser, Chair  
Maryland House Ways and Means Committee  
Room 131, House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

### **RE: HB1047 - Information**

Delegate Kaiser and Committee Members:

My name is Katherine Berry. I am the Election Director in Carroll County and the co-chair of the Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) Legislative Committee. MAEO represents the local boards of elections throughout the State of Maryland. I am writing today representing MAEO with information as it pertains to HB1047 - Mail-In Voting Enhancement Act.

This bill would require local boards of elections notify voters of activity regarding applications and ballots upon receipt and disposition, to establish drop boxes following various guidelines, and require notification to a voter of any curing of the voter's ballot or envelope that is required.

MAEO would like to continue the practice of ensuring all voters have a voice during elections. The State Board of Elections provided a great enhancement in the 2020 General Election that allowed for voters to track the status of their mail-in ballot. It is probable that some phone calls and emails were eliminated because voters could look up this information online. It is assumed that enhancements to this feature including text messaging and emails will require significant technological updates to the voter registration database. Local boards of elections do not have the capacity to manually manage the task of notifications to voters, so it will have to be done from the state-level.

MAEO understands that the drop boxes were extremely popular in the 2020 election cycle and we would expect that this trend would continue. We are in support of having drop boxes available, but would like to allow for the State Board to consider a formula for assessing the amount of drop boxes required for each local board of elections by considering the turnout of voters who typically vote by mail. Since Maryland is not a vote-by-mail state, it may not be cost-effective to produce more drop boxes that the local boards of elections do not have enough staff to manage in comparison to the amount of ballots that are dropped off by voters on a daily basis. It should also be noted that the placement of drop boxes is largely based upon facility's willingness to allow for the box to be placed. In an official capacity using voter registration data, it is unknown what type of demographics surround a ballot drop box placement. The local boards of elections are very limited in the amount of facilities willing to allow usage of their parking lot for the drop boxes, so placing more restrictions may prove to create more difficulty in their placement.

In addition to the limited facility usage of drop box placement, requiring security could place a significant fiscal impact. Currently, many local boards utilize cameras that are associated with school systems and government facilities that are not managed by the local board; therefore, do not have direct access to the camera footage unless an incident occurs and footage is required. This is due to the security of their network, especially school systems. If physical security must be hired because security cameras are not available or not able to be installed, this could also create a fiscal burden to the counties. Consideration of a 50/50 cost split between the county and State may be necessary.

MAEO would like to thank the committee for their consideration of the comments provided and continue to support our need for added personnel and increases to budgets to perform all tasks required.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions, please contact me at (410)386-2958 or [Katherine.berry@maryland.gov](mailto:Katherine.berry@maryland.gov).

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