



# MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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## **HB 1048 – Election Law – Permanent Absentee Ballot List House Ways and Means Committee February 23, 2021**

### **SUPPORT**

**Donna S. Edwards  
President  
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony supporting HB 1048 – Election Law – Permanent Absentee Ballot List. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

The State Boards and County Boards processed 1,215,608 Vote-By-Mail ballots in the Presidential Preference Primary race. With proper planning and enabling legislation to do so, we know that we can run our elections in Maryland by mail – allowing for those who still desire to vote in person to do so – with enormous success, and we have the proof of concept from last year.

HB 1048 is a commonsense voting reform that creates a smooth and easy process for voters to vote by mail and provides an additional layer of consistency for our local boards of elections. Instead of having to request an absentee ballot, for every election – and needing to know the start and stop dates for making the request – voters could ask to be placed on a permanent list for all future elections to vote absentee. This simple action would free up resources for local boards of education, resulting in shorter lines on Election Day.

HB 1048 is reversible for the voter, as well. If they no longer wish to vote absentee, they can request to be removed from the Permanent Absentee Ballot List. Therefore, no one is stuck in one form of voting or another. They have the freedom to choose which style of voting they like best and, more importantly, they have the freedom to change their mind.

**We ask for a favorable report on HB 1048.**