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PARLIAMENTARIAN

Ways and Means Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 23, 2021

House Bill 1047 Mail-in Voting Enhancement Act

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to present **House Bill 1047 Mail-in Voting Enhancement Act**, which would require the State Board of Elections to make no less than 300 ballot drop boxes available statewide for at least 30 days before each election day in order to have voters deposit completed absentee ballots in person.

This General Assembly has worked to expand the use of ballot drop-boxes in the state, making voting more accessible and safe for all Marylanders. In 2020, we saw a record number of voters around the country, and the ability to vote safely was critical amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. HB 1047, along with HB 1048, makes improvements to our mail-in ballot system to ensure every registered voter in the state can exercise their right to safely vote. Together, these bills create a no-excuse permanent absentee voter list, establish minimum requirements for the number of secure ballot dropboxes, and improve the process amongst other benefits.

HB 1047 requires that the State Board of Elections ensures that ballot drop boxes are available 30 days before each election through election day; there are at least 300 ballot drop boxes available for each statewide primary and general election; and for each special primary and statewide general election, there is an appropriate number of ballot drop boxes available. The bill also requires the board to create a certain formula for the purpose of allocating ballot drop boxes among the counties. The formula includes the State Board to have ballot drop boxes compliant with the federal Americans with disabilities act, consistent in security features, and in each county.

When accessible to everyone, drop boxes are a highly popular option with voters and increase voter participation. For these reasons, I urge the committee to give a favorable report for **House Bill 1047**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jheanelle Wilkins".

Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins,