



*defending democracy using peaceful civil resistance*

February 19, 2021

**Testimony on HB 1047  
Election Law—Mail-In Voting Enhancement Act  
House Ways and Means**

**Position: Support**

Hold the Line Maryland strongly supports House Bill 1047. Hold the Line Maryland is a grassroots, all-volunteer organization, dedicated to preserving and insuring democracy through diverse actions, including the support of campaign-finance reform, election protection measures, and the expansion of enfranchisement. HB 1047 meets our organization's mission because it: (i) requires that certain guidelines for absentee voting provide for voter access to information concerning the status of the voter's absentee ballot; (ii) requires the Maryland State Board of Elections ensure that ballot drop boxes are available during a certain period before each election; (iii) requires the State Board of Elections makes at least 300 ballot drop boxes available for certain elections; and (iv) requires the State Board to establish a certain formula for the purpose of allocating ballot drop boxes among the counties.

Hold the Line Maryland recognizes that the availability of a strong, clear and easily accessed election for eligible Maryland voters increases participation in our state's government, enhances the engagement between Maryland voters and their representatives, and contributes to a sense of civic pride in our systems of government.

The COVID-19 pandemic created stresses on in-person voting that could have threatened democratic civic participation during the 2020 presidential election. HB 1047 would put in place safety measures to ensure that Marylanders can participate in voting in a safe way.

Because the bill also calls for updated means of communication, it sends a clear message to our state's voters that Maryland is aligned with the growing trend to continually modernize our voting process and to encourage our eligible voters to exercise their voting rights.

With this legislation, Maryland is continuing to stand for transparency and equity in the electoral process.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on HB1047.

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Hold the Line Maryland

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