



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: HB1068 – Support

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 in support of HB1068 – Election Law – Absentee Ballot Canvassing – Multiple Ballots Cast by an Individual.

This bill would require that if the local board receives an absentee ballot AND a provisional ballot for the voter that the absentee ballot be counted. Prior to the 2020 election, Maryland rejected both ballots if there was more than one ballot returned. Due to the mail-in ballot process in 2020, the ballot that was dated first was counted.

MAEO would like to continue the practice of ensuring all voters have a voice during elections, so codifying the practice of counting one ballot and rejecting another in a uniform manner is acceptable. There have been two significant instances whereby a voter casts an absentee ballot and a provisional ballot. The first is due to lack of confidence that the absentee ballot was received by the local board of elections and the second is because the voter changed who they wanted to vote for and went to vote on election day. It is necessary to have a consistent requirement either in law or simply in regulation to ensure all local boards of elections are counting the same ballot because some counties have canvasses for a day while others have canvass for weeks. This bill also suggests to the voter that they cannot simply “change their mind” in who they’re voting for since it’s not allowed for someone to vote at early voting and then come back on election day because they “changed their mind”.

MAEO asks the committee for a favorable report as it pertains to HB1068. This bill assists us in effectively managing ballots during the canvass process.

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

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