



February 23, 2021

**Testimony on HB 1048  
Permanent Absentee Ballot List  
Ways and Means**

**Position: Favorable  
Indivisible HoCo MD**

Howard County Indivisible-an organization with over 700 members-supports passage of HB 1048 which will require the State Board of Elections to establish procedures for the creation of a permanent absentee list and also the procedures which will enable a citizen to place his/her name on the list.

Recent tragic events in Washington, D.C on January 6, 2021 and the progress of the 2020 election in the fifty states have made it clear that access to the ballot box must be preserved and broadened in order to protect our beleaguered democracy. Mail-in voting is key to expanding ballot access for many parts of the electorate who might not otherwise be able to vote, as was demonstrated in the Covid-19 pandemic. In Baltimore, alone, over a third of the adult population lack access to a private vehicle. Older citizens and persons with disabilities also have more challenges to voting. Facilitating main-in voting (“absentee”) for all Marylanders by requiring procedures to create and maintain a permanent absentee voting list is an important step to ensuring that Maryland provides the greatest possible ballot access to its citizens.

**We encourage a favorable report**

Carol B. O’Keeffe

**IndivisibleHoCoMD**