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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
IN SUPPORT OF
HB 1047 – MAIL-IN VOTING ENHANCEMENT ACT**

February 23, 2021

Get Money Out (GMOM) is an all-volunteer organization established eight years ago. We want all citizens to have equal access to the ballot and an equal say in governance. Through our grassroots actions, we have signed up over 9,000 supporters.

In 2020 we experienced a huge increase in mail-in voting because of the pandemic. This trend may continue, and we may wish to actively encourage this trend for many reasons. States with widespread mail-in voting report higher turnout over an extended period. This was higher than expected before no-excuse mail-in voting was encouraged. An MIT study reports: “The safest conclusion to draw is that extending VBM [vote by mail] options increases [sic] turnout modestly in midterm and presidential elections but may increase turnout more in primaries, local elections, and special elections. This modest increase likely comes in two ways: by bringing marginal voters into the electorate and by retaining voters who might otherwise drop out of the electorate.”ⁱ

The evidence of the 2020 election appears to show that VBM increases voter participation. Since we believe that Maryland should make mail-in voting easier and more accessible, it only makes sense to codify a requirement for ballot-tracking like the one included in House Bill 1047 to further enhance voter confidence in this mode of voting. We strongly support the provision that allows voters to cure problems with their mail-in ballots. The bill also has requirements for an increased number of drop boxes and provides criteria for their placement, geographic distribution, accessibility, and security. It sets limitations on electioneering near drop boxes similar to those in effect for polling places.

We hope the Committee will work on the details of this bill and issue a favorable report that will further encourage and promote the increased use of mail-in voting.

ⁱ <https://electionlab.mit.edu/research/voting-mail-and-absentee-voting>