



MARYLAND FEDERATION  
*of*  
Republican Women

The Honorable Anne Kaiser, Chairman, and Members, Ways and Means

RE: HB 153 - OPPOSE  
HB 274 - OPPOSE

Dear Delegates:

On behalf of the more than 1300 members of the Maryland Federation of Republican Women (MFRW), representing citizens from across Maryland, I am writing to ask you for Unfavorable Reports on HB 153 and HB 274.

We strongly oppose HB 153 and HB 274. The 2020 Primary Election was done entirely by mail (mailing ballots to every voter) and the General Election forced many people to vote by mail because less than 1/3 of polling places were open for voting.

HB 153 and HB 274 mandates that a ballot will be mailed to all persons listed on the voters' rolls as active voters. Mail in voting already exists in our State – any registered voter may request to vote by mail.

Our Voter Rolls are not updated regularly. Having used Door-to-Door walk books prepared from our Voter Rolls, I have witnessed firsthand that our voter rolls contain many names of individuals that are no longer eligible to vote including those who have moved out of the district or the state; and those of people who have died or become ineligible for other reasons.

Mass-mailed ballots create the opportunity for unscrupulous individuals to “harvest ballots” by removing them from individuals’ mail boxes or from trash cans in multi-family housing communities where residents have discarded them. These harvested ballots can then be voted by anyone and not the registered voter. Mass-mailed ballots also afford some individuals the ability to unfairly pressure voters, particularly the elderly or very young voters, to vote for a specific candidate or slate of candidates by “helping” them fill out their ballot. And then there is the whole discussion about mail delays that we have all witnessed in our lives in 2020 and still ongoing.

When a voter votes at their Polling Place on Election Day or during Early Voting their ballot is completely secret and their ability to vote for the candidates of their choice is protected. They know their ballot is counted because they place the ballot in the collator. They have no such assurance with an election by mail. U.S. Mail delivery has become much less reliable and adding millions of “mail-in” ballots will flood the system and put delivery of ballots at risk.

Once all the ballots have been cast and hopefully returned to the Board of Elections, Marylanders had to wait many days (and in some cases weeks) to find out who won. Delays in vote tabulations for days or weeks reduces confidence in the election results. The canvassing of ballots in elections-by-mail is prolonged over weeks with much higher costs for the labor to process all of the ballots.

For many reasons, mailing a ballot to every registered voter is a much less secure way to conduct our elections and is much more susceptible to vote manipulation. In-person elections at all polling places has worked for hundreds of years. The system is not broken and does not need to be “fixed” by elections by mail. Maryland voters already have many days to vote in person between Early Voting and Election Day and Absentee Ballots (mail in ballots) are available to any registered voter who requests one. There is no need for mandating mailing ballot to everyone.

In conclusion, the members of the Maryland Federation of Republican Women strongly oppose HB 153 and HB 274 and ask for Unfavorable Reports

Thank you,

*Diana D Waterman*

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