



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: Senate Bill 925 – Prince George's County - Special Elections Conducted by Mail - Voting Centers

SPONSOR: Senator Patterson

HEARING DATE: March 16, 2022

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 925**, which modifies requirements regarding in-person voting centers during a special election conducted by mail in Prince George's County.

Senate Bill 925 provides our County Council with the authority to prescribe the length of in-person voting that would occur during a vote by mail special election in Prince George's County. Under current law if the County Council chooses to conduct a vote by mail Special Election, the County must hold Early Voting for 6 days at a minimum of one vote center for a single district or one vote center per district for a countywide election. There is no flexibility in this provision of the law to reduce the number of voting days if the County sees fit. This bill would authorize the County Council to decide how many voting days will be needed and will not lock the County into having to open voting sites for 6 consecutive days during a vote by mail special election. The bill authorizes the Prince George's County to follow the same laws already in place for Montgomery County.

The Prince George's County Board of Elections recently held a special election to fill a vacancy in one of our Council Districts and due to the timeline required for the election in the county charter, the County Council had no choice but to hold the Special Primary Election over the holiday season, on January 4, 2022, and the Special General Election on February 1st. The County Council approved an election to be conducted by mail, however, there was no flexibility in the law and as a result, early voting was held for six days, beginning on December 27th until January 3rd.

During the six day early voting period for the special primary election less than 200 voters voted early and even few voters voted on Election Day. However, a majority of ballots were received by mail.

There are high costs for keeping the Early Voting Centers open for the Special Primary Election and General Elections, if the County could have reduced the number of days of early voting by 3 days, that would have saved the resources and while allowing residents to vote their preferred method, by mail.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 925** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.