



Barbara Noveau, Executive Director, DoTheMostGood

Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Testimony on: SB0112 – Election Law – False Ballot Drop Boxes – Criminal Penalty

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: January 26, 2022

Bill Contact: Senator Cheryl Kagan

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grassroots organization with more than 3000 members who live in a wide range of communities in primarily in Montgomery County, from Bethesda near the DC line north to Frederick and from Poolesville east to Silver Spring and Olney. DTMG supports legislation and activities that help ensure equity in voting, civil rights, education, and criminal justice; access to healthcare, transportation, and housing; and promote positive and trusting relationships between our communities and our state and local governments.

Among the stunning voter suppression tactics that have been reported in recent elections, the planting of false drop boxes is one of the most disturbing. Voters who vote by mail may be tossing their ballot into a dumpster without knowledge.

While this action has not been reported in Maryland, it is prudent to outlaw the practice and impose stiff penalties on anyone found committing such ballot theft. That is why DTMG strongly supports SB0112.

The Covid pandemic, combined with a pro-voter mindset in Maryland as a whole, the number of mail-in/absentee ballots cast in Maryland has been increasing every year. And, as we know people of color, low income, and immigrant voters disproportionately depend on voting by mail. Recent problems with the timely delivery of mail by the Postal Service have led many Local and State Boards of Election, including ours, to install secure Ballot Drop Boxes where ballots are picked up at least daily by authorized election workers.

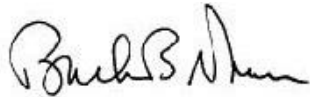
With the increase in official ballot drop boxes, there have also been reports of unauthorized people placing unauthorized boxes in areas where they want to

suppress the vote with the intent that the ballots will never be counted. SB0112 clearly sets out that no individual, organization, or political party may collect ballots during an election in a container that is not an official ballot drop box designated as such by the State or Local Board of Elections. It further establishes that installing a fake drop box is a felony, punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

Safeguarding every vote is foundational to our democracy and any person or organization interfering with that is undermining that democracy.

Therefore, DTMG strongly supports SB0112 and urges a FAVORABLE report on this bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barbara Noveau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Barbara Noveau
Executive Director, DoTheMostGood
barbara@dtmg.org
240-338-3048