

**SB 738 Senator Bryan Simonaire\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kara Contino

Position: FAV

**BRYAN W. SIMONAIRE**  
*Legislative District 31*  
Anne Arundel County

—  
MINORITY LEADER  
—

Education, Health, and  
Environmental Affairs Committee

*Subcommittees*

Chair, Alcohol

Health  
—

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and  
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area



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*The Senate of Maryland*  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Written Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 738**

Chairman and members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, I am here to introduce and voice my support for Senate Bill 738 – *Secure Elections Act of 2022*.

Senate Bill 738 would require the State Board of Elections, in collaboration with the local boards, to conduct an audit of absentee ballots cast in each statewide election. The audit would consist of verifying the voter's signature for each selected ballot and would require the audit be expanded if a certain threshold is exceeded.

# **SB 738 - Secure Elections Act of 2022.pdf**

Uploaded by: Aleksandra Petrovic

Position: UNF

February 23, 2022

**Testimony on SB 738**  
**Secure Elections Act of 2022**  
**Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs**

**Position: Unfavorable**

Common Cause Maryland opposes SB 738 which would require the state Board of Elections and local boards to conduct an audit of absentee ballots cast in each statewide election, requiring that the audit consists of verifying a voter's signature.

The audit requiring the local board reaching out to (1) notify the voter that there is an issue with their signature and (2) get a new signature from a voter, seems to be a long, burdensome, and costly process. SB 738 does not seem to add any benefits to the already secure voting in place. SB 738 would impose an enormous and unjustified cost on the state.

Voting is celebrated as the most fundamental form of civic participation in a democracy, a means by which all voices are counted on an equal basis. Verifying a voter's signature on an absentee ballot is a burdensome requirement that potentially undermines the goal of civic participation by not allowing certain ballots to count due to an unsuccessful attempt to reach a voter in a timely manner.

In today's society, most documents are typed and electronically connected, our signatures are now in many instances written through a touch screen. Our signatures are constantly changing, and the signatures that we had when we registered to vote at 18 are most likely very different than the signature we use currently.

SB 738 seems to be based on the idea that there is a large-scale voter fraud being committed. In isolated instances where voter fraud does happen, local government bodies find them right away. There is only anecdotal evidence of voter fraud happening on a large scale, and without any evidence of proof that fraud is occurring on a large scale, there is no need for a costly type of measure like this.

For these reasons, we urge an unfavorable report.

**SB738.Elections22 .pdf**

Uploaded by: Virginia Crespo

Position: UNF



## Maryland Retired School Personnel Association

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**Senate Bill 738**  
**In Opposition To**  
**Secure Elections Act of 2022**  
**Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee**  
**Hearing: February 23, 2022 1:00 p.m.**

Dear Honorable Senator Paul Pinsky, Chair, and Honorable Senator Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair, and other distinguished Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee members,

The Legislative Committee of the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA) opposes and requests an unfavorable report on SB 738 Secure Elections Act of 2022.

This bill purports to solve a problem which does not exist in Maryland. It requires the “State Board of Elections in collaboration with the local boards of elections to conduct an audit of absentee ballots cast in each statewide election”, even if no evidence of fraud was found in the past election.

The suggested process for this audit simply delays the reporting of the outcome of the election; and is unlikely to change the result of the election, while also adding costs to every election. Maryland is noted for its fair and honest elections. We can be proud of the way we conduct our elections and there is no need to create distrust or confusion in a system and process that works well from bills such as these.

On behalf of the almost 13,000 members of the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, we strongly urge your opposition to Senate Bill 738.

Sincerely,

George D. Denny, Jr.  
President

Virginia G. Crespo  
Legislative Aide

# **LWVMD testimony - SB 738 - Secure Elections Act of**

Uploaded by: Janet Millenson

Position: INFO



**TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**SB 738 – Secure Elections Act of 2022**

**POSITION: Informational Only**

**BY: Nancy Soreng, President**

**DATE: February 23, 2022**

The League of Women Voters of Maryland, a nonpartisan organization with 1500 members, supports offering all registered voters the option of voting by mail (absentee) so long as best practices are followed. As this choice becomes increasingly popular across the state, we recognize that the issue of signature verification must be addressed.

There are many technical, fiscal, political, and social factors to consider when planning a system that all Marylanders will perceive as effective yet fair. Here are some of the most important:

Successful implementation will entail a significant statewide investment in equipment and training for the local Boards of Elections. In states and counties elsewhere that perform signature verification, specially trained verification judges make final decisions, though automated verification is employed (if legally authorized) when warranted by the quantity of ballots. The major manufacturers of election hardware, including ES&S and Runbeck, all rely on the same signature recognition software with a reputation for being efficient and robust. Ballots can be sorted into yes/no/maybe groups based on their “similarity score” to digitized images already on file.

However, according to the vendors, such automation is only cost-justifiable when mail-in ballot volumes are regularly 50,000 or more, because the bulky sorting equipment can run to \$100,000. Yet under Maryland law, all jurisdictions are required to have a uniform election process. Equipment that might be very useful in the largest counties would be unnecessary and unaffordable for the less populous ones. How will this be resolved?

Changing our voting process to include this new element will require intensive voter education and outreach. Many Marylanders who prefer absentee voting, including the elderly and those with disabilities, have legitimate concerns about the impact of signature verification on their ability to cast a ballot. What accommodations will be made to ensure accessibility?

We strongly recommend **establishing a workgroup to study signature verification** for mail-in ballots. Such a workgroup should include bipartisan members of the legislature and selected staff, Board of Elections officials, advocates for the disabled and for minority populations, and other appropriate participants. The group could recommend procedures for signature recognition as well as guidelines for equipment procurement.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland urges the committee to take this information into consideration when evaluating SB 738.