



Ella Ennis, Legislative Chairman  
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The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary, Chairman  
and Members of the Ways and Means Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
Annapolis, Maryland

RE: HB 212 – Signature Verification of Absentee Ballots – **FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Atterbeary and Committee Members,

The Maryland Federation of Republican Women supports HB 212.

HB 212 adds the ability of a voter to request an absentee ballot by written request with signature verification. It requires the State Board of Elections to provide local boards with machines that can electronically verify signatures on the absentee ballot application or request, and on the envelope of the absentee ballot. It also provides for alternate types of acceptable identification if the signature is not accepted.

It is important that every vote cast be the vote of a validly registered voter. HB 212 requires that every absentee ballot application and absentee ballot envelope be signed by the voter, and that the signature of the voter be verified against the voter's signature on their voter registration record. Having a machine capable of electronically verifying the signature reduces the chance for errors.

Without the voter's signature and signature verification on absentee ballots, a ballot could be filled out by another person and the valid voter denied their right to vote. Ballots can be lost or stolen from mail boxes, particularly in multi-family housing or group home facilities. Verification of the voter's signature on their absentee ballot return envelope is an important safeguard.

Please vote a **FAVORABLE** report for HB 212.

Sincerely,

Ella Ennis  
Legislative Chairman  
Maryland Federation of Republican Women