



**Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council**

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Ways & Means Committee

HB 99: Election Law – Absentee Ballots – Signature Requirements and Verification

January 25, 2022

Position: Oppose

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) is an independent, public policy organization that creates changes to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. The DD Council is led by people with developmental disabilities and their families. **It is within that context that the DD Council opposes HB 99 due to the disproportionate and negative impacts it would have on voters with developmental disabilities.**

WHAT does this legislation do:

- HB 99 requires the verification of a voter's signature on an absentee ballot envelope by comparing the signature on the ballot to the one the voter provided in the voter's previous registration record.

WHY is this a problem?

- The bill creates barriers for people with developmental disabilities, who are more likely to vote by absentee ballot due to existing voting location accessibility issues¹.
- There is no opportunity to remedy or challenge the disqualification of the voter's ballot as determined by the local board of education.

HB 99 would be a step in the wrong direction for ensuring that voters with developmental disabilities have access to, and can effectively participate in, the electoral process. **For that reason, the DD Council opposes HB 99.**

Contact: Zach Hands, Communications and Legislative Liaison, zhands.mddc@gmail.com

¹https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/voters/Disability_and_voting_accessibility_in_the_2020_elections_final_report_on_survey_results.pdf