

CHERYL C. KAGAN
Legislative District 17
Montgomery County

Vice Chair
Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee

Joint Audit Committee
Joint Committee on Federal Relations



Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Suite 2 West
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
301-858-3134 · 410-841-3134
800-492-7122 Ext. 3134
Fax 301-858-3665 · 410-841-3665
Cheryl.Kagan@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB163: Curing & Precinct-Level Reporting
EMERGENCY BILL

House Ways and Means Committee

Tuesday, March 22, 2022 | 1pm

In the 2020 Presidential Election, [46% of American voters used mail-in or absentee ballots](#). In Maryland, [a whopping 61%](#) chose this method to cast their votes. Despite that, our law does not yet allow Local Boards of Elections (LBEs) to process ballots before Election Day-- potentially causing significant setbacks in reporting of election results. The delayed start to processing can also cause problems for those who forget to sign the oath on their ballot envelope, nullifying their vote if it's not "cured."

SB163 would permit our LBEs to review the envelopes and to open, scan, and tabulate ballots (but not release the results) **eight business days** before the start of Early Voting. **Especially with the rescheduled Primary Election Day to July 19th, our LBE Staff is going to need extra time to process an influx of early mail-in ballots from voters who will be out of town on Election Day.**

This bill requires that the individual with a missing signature be notified as soon as practicable, but **no later than three business days** after the error is detected. Individuals will have up to **ten days** after Election Day at 10am to "cure" their ballot by providing a signature via text, email, online portal, mail, or in-person at the Board of Elections office.

This legislation also provides clear guidance for counting a ballot if a voter submits both a mail-in and a provisional ballot.

Finally, SB163 requires precinct-level reporting of election results. According to the National Council of State Legislatures (NCSL), seven of the eight states with Vote-by-Mail (California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington) provide precinct-level reporting. This data helps candidates, political parties, and advocacy organizations to target their time and limited resources. Even more crucially, it helps identify any anomalies (error, fraud, or voter suppression) in the election results.

I urge a favorable report on SB163 to ensure that Marylanders' votes are counted.