



February 17, 2022

Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary
Chair, Ways & Means Committee
Room 131
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Opposition to HB 939

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Mayor and City Council of Gaithersburg oppose House Bill 939, Elections – Absentee Ballots – Mailing of Unrequested Ballots, and respectfully request that you grant this bill an unfavorable report.

This bill prohibits municipal boards of elections from mailing absentee ballots to its own constituents for municipal elections, according to its own terms. This is an unwarranted encroachment upon local government authority.

The City enjoys its authority to run its own municipal elections via our Board of Supervisors of Elections. The Board oversees all regular and special City elections including the nomination and verification of candidates, financial reports and voting. Appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council, the Board consists of five members and one alternate who serve staggered four-year terms.

We oppose the Maryland General Assembly's preemption of our city's ability to reasonably operate its own elections in the manner it chooses - especially regarding a matter so operational in nature as this. We take our responsibility to hold fair, transparent, accountable elections extremely seriously, and respectfully request you continue to allow us to do this as we reasonably and appropriately deem most fit.

For the reasons stated herein, we respectfully request an unfavorable vote on House Bill 939.

Respectfully submitted,

Jud Ashman
Mayor

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