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Chair

Government Operations and
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Joint Committee on Administrative,
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Testimony of Delegate Samuel I.

Rosenberg Before the House Ways and

Means Committee In Support Of

House Bill 428

**Election Law – Foreign Manufacturer of
Electronic Voting Systems – Notification
and Termination of Contract**

“Maryland has an opportunity to once again lead the nation by adopting additional common-sense reforms to ensure the integrity of the vote and our elections.”

-U.S. Congressman John Sarbanes on the 2020 version of the bill.

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

Interference with an election by a hostile foreign national is a growing threat to our democracy. The possibility of a foreign national accessing components of election equipment exists no matter where these components are manufactured, but the risk is undoubtedly higher if these components are made or modified abroad.

House Bill 428 would require “election service providers” to report to the State Board of Elections if components of election systems are either manufactured or modified abroad. Election service providers will have to report to the State Board of Elections on what modifications or manufacturing was done to which specific components and in which country. Further, election service providers must explain what was done to protect the security of the components while they were abroad.

If the State Administrator receives a report from an election service provider that components were modified or manufactured abroad, the Administrator must forward the report to the State Board of Elections, the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Attorney General, and the Department of Information Technology within five days.

If the administrator determines that “a foreign national has the ability to control, influence, or direct the manufacturing of an election system in any manner that would

compromise or influence, or give the appearance of compromising or influencing, the independence and integrity of an election,” the administrator can terminate the contract with the election service provider in question.

Should this occur, the administrator would have seven days to notify the State Board of Elections, the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Attorney General, and the Department of Information Technology of the contract termination, and the reasons for the termination.

This bill is important to safeguarding the security of our elections. Even the appearance that interference with election components is possible undermines faith in the democratic process. This bill prevents the real and perceived fears of foreign intervention in our voting systems.

This bill unanimously passed out of the House of Delegates last year as HB 369. It was supported in 2020 by U.S. Congressman John Sarbanes as HB 392 who commended the effort “to ensure the integrity of Maryland election systems.”

I urge a favorable report on HB 428.

February 8, 2022