

HB0707--02.15.21 -- Election Law Deadline for Sel

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Position: FAV



POSITION STATEMENT

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

**HOUSE BILL 707 -- ELECTION LAW --
DEADLINE FOR SELECTION OF LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR**

Sponsor: Delegates Barve and Stein

February 15, 2022

**DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

Position: Support

House Bill 707 – Election Law – Deadline for Selection of Lieutenant Governor would repeal the existing constitutional requirement that a gubernatorial candidate must select his or her running mate at the time that he/she files their candidacy.

Instead, a candidate seeking a nomination for governor in a primary election would be required to select a running mate no later than 21 days after the primary election. If a candidate is seeking a nomination for governor outside of the primary election process, he or she would still be required to designate a running mate at the time of filing for office.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) began promoting this change following the 2018 primary election, after an impressive group of gubernatorial candidates and others seeking office were eliminated from consideration for the post of lieutenant governor due to the current filing requirement. Requiring a gubernatorial candidate to make a declaration of his or her running mate at the time of filing candidacy papers eliminates other candidates who run for governor or unsuccessful candidates for federal or state legislative offices or county executive or legislative offices from being considered for the job of lieutenant governor.

While candidates for lieutenant governor are qualified in their own right, adding the unsuccessful gubernatorial candidates and other unsuccessful federal, state and local candidates to the list of potential lieutenant governor candidates would provide the primary election nominee with an opportunity to add specific expertise and experience, balance the party's ticket, demonstrate a willingness to embrace divergent policy positions, forge party unity, and present the strongest team. This change would benefit either of the major parties that has a contested primary election.

The GBC encourages the committee to approve this common-sense legislation. Changing the timing of the selection of the lieutenant governor candidates would be a positive step to ensure highly qualified candidates for Maryland's top elected positions.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on House Bill 707.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 67-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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HB707

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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 707 – Election Law – Deadline for Selection of Lieutenant Governor

House Ways and Means Committee – February 15, 2022

HB 707 extends the timeframe during which a candidate seeking their party's gubernatorial nomination may choose a running mate, the Lieutenant Governor. My purpose in introducing this bill is to expand the pool of viable, qualified nominees for Lt. Governor and, in this way, allow Maryland's political parties to build a more dynamic gubernatorial ticket. Ultimately, the State will benefit when this change creates a stronger leadership team.

As it stands now, the Maryland Constitution requires a primary candidate for Governor on the day they file with the Elections Board to also designate their choice for Lt. Governor.

This schedule creates a troubling scenario in which current office-holders, for example, have to decide whether to give up their position to join a candidate who may or may not win the primary. It also prevents other, highly qualified gubernatorial candidates, who did not come in first, from running for Lt. Governor.

Through a change to the constitution, HB 707 will allow the Lt. Governor choice to be made 21 days after the primary. The gubernatorial nominee will have a full three weeks to choose their running mate among a significantly increased list of candidates.

Paul Pinsky, Chairman of the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee is sponsoring the Senate cross-file to this bill.

I urge a favorable report of HB 707. Thank you.