

# **HB1089\_Represent Maryland\_Favorable .pdf**

Uploaded by: Behnam Tabatabai

Position: FAV



**BILL: HB1089**

**BILL TITLE: Election Law - Registered Voter List Security and Electronic Signature Requirements for Petitions**

**BILL SPONSOR: Delegate Ruth**

**COMMITTEE: Ways and Means**

**POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**February 25, 2022**

### **TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF HB1089**

Honorable Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Washington, and members of the committee-

In the year 2022, where you can order anything you need online 24 hours a day, you can have "face-to-face conversations with people on the other side of the world, and I can give formal verbal testimony from my dining room table, this bill makes sense. Add to that the fact that we are still in the midst of a viral pandemic that is projected to continue-our laws and method must be updated to reflect how society is now functioning.

Electronic signatures for petitions had previously been made temporarily permissible; all this bill does is reintroduce and make them permanent. This is a small lift with big impact and will show voters that the legislature is serious about making it easier for them to participate in the democratic process.

Please find HB1089 favorable, and bring petitioning into the 21st century.

Sincerely,  
Ben Tabatabai  
Member  
Represent Maryland  
Maryland Voter-LD07

Represent Maryland is a grassroots anti-corruption group of citizen advocates that #FightForDemocracy in Maryland. Our democracy solutions include: Public Election Funds, Independent Redistricting, Special Elections, Ranked Choice Voting, Increased Ethics and Transparency, and Increased Voter Participation.

[Cristi@RepresentMaryland.org](mailto:Cristi@RepresentMaryland.org)

Authorized by Represent Maryland PAC, T Miller, Treasurer  
[www.RepresentMaryland.org](http://www.RepresentMaryland.org)

# **HB1089\_Voter\_List\_Security\_MLC\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY FOR HB1089**  
**ELECTION LAW – REGISTERED VOTER LIST SECURITY AND ELECTRONIC**  
**SIGNATURE REQUIREMENTS FOR PETITIONS**

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Ruth

**Committee:** Ways and Means

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB1089 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Coalition members are generally very active participants in election work and also in getting ballot petition signatures. This bill makes the process of getting signatures on ballot petitions easier by allowing for electronic signatures. We understand that this process was created due to the pandemic, but it has been successful and should become permanent. Having more people engaged and empowered to support people and ideas that affect our state is a positive thing.

Many of our member groups also do canvassing and phone banking and work with the voter lists. We think it is important to make sure that the voter data should be secure and only used to support the voting process.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

# **HB1089 - Clean Water Action - Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jennifer Kunze

Position: FAV

**HB1089 - Election Law - Registered Voter List Security and Electronic  
Signature Requirements for Petitions**

House Ways and Means Committee

March 1, 2022

**Position: Favorable**

Dear Chair Atterbeary and Members of the Committee,

Clean Water Action strongly supports HB1089 as a valuable method of making the tools of our democracy more accessible to Maryland residents.

Ballot petitions are a valuable tool for individual Marylanders to organize and make their opinions heard directly. Over the years, Clean Water Action staff and members have supported a wide variety of such petitions. However, the requirement that petitions be signed on paper is burdensome and holds people back from participating in the process. People with disabilities, people who are dependent on transit, and people whose jobs have lengthy or irregular hours face extra barriers to connecting with a petition circulator in person to sign - let alone barriers to participating in the process by collecting signatures themselves.

The ongoing pandemic has only heightened these barriers to participating in ballot access campaigns. In 2020, the State Board of Elections created temporary measures to allow electronic signatures, proving that they are possible and safe. Please pass HB1089 to make electronic signatures on ballot petitions accessible to Marylanders into the future, giving more people more access to the tools of our democracy.

Thank you,

Jennifer Kunze  
Maryland Coordinator  
Clean Water Action  
[jkunze@cleanwater.org](mailto:jkunze@cleanwater.org)

# **HB 1089 - Election Law - Registered Voter List Sec**

Uploaded by: Morgan Drayton

Position: FAV

**March 1, 2022**

**Testimony on HB 1089**  
**Election Law – Registered Voter List Security and Electronic Signature Requirements for**  
**Petitions**  
**Ways and Means**

**Position: Favorable**

Common Cause Maryland supports HB 1089 which will empower citizens by enhancing their ability to directly participate in the petition process guaranteed under the Maryland Constitution.

The petition process is an important part of Maryland's democratic government; it gives citizens the chance to have their voice heard and to bring legislative action they disagree with to the voters to decide. It is a process that deserves greater accessibility but continues to be restrictive.

The process of petitioning largely involves direct contact with Maryland voters. The methods of reaching voters typically involve canvassing at high traffic locations like metro stops and farmers markets or going door-to-door. And while petitions can be posted online, they require proper formatting which typically comes in the form of a PDF, limiting overall usability for most voters.

This process creates unnecessary hurdles to an already limited tool as most voters have limited availability to interact in-person with petitioners for reasons ranging from work schedules to access to public transportation. This proves even more difficult for the voters who are confined to their place of residence.

HB 1089 seeks to address this by codifying the temporary regulations adopted by the State Board of Elections (SBE) during the 2020 elections in response to COVID-19, allowing for electronic petition signatures. This temporary change which has been extended by SBE utilize the technology available to us, creating greater access to all citizens throughout the state and making the process of verifying signatures seamless for election officials.

Citizens often times feel like power is out of their hands. HB 1089 is a step forward in that it helps reduce barriers that usually hinder direct participation in the petition process by voters. Public engagement in the democratic process should be encouraged, whether citizens are voting for elected officials or bringing issues to the ballot.

We urge a favorable report.



# **Ruth - HB1089 - support.pdf**

Uploaded by: S Ruth

Position: FAV



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Sponsor Testimony in Support of HB1089

Election Law - Registered Voter List Security and Electronic Signature Requirements for  
Petitions

Delegate Sheila Ruth

March 1, 2022

In 2022, I can sign documents, put in a contract on a house, or sign my tax return with an electronic signature. Electronic signatures are legal and used almost everywhere - except for ballot petitions. These petitions, intended to place a local question, a political party, or an unaffiliated candidate on the ballot, must still be signed on paper.

If I want to exercise this democratic right guaranteed to me under the Maryland Constitution, I must be able to physically sign a piece of paper, generally in the presence of a circulator. Even if I self-certify by signing as both the signer and the circulator, I then still have to return that piece of paper to whomever is collecting the signatures.

This process can be particularly burdensome on people with disabilities, transit-dependent people, or people who work long or irregular hours or multiple jobs.

HB1089 would allow ballot petitions to be signed electronically, which would lower the bar for access to this democratic right for all Marylanders. In 2020, the State Board of Elections allowed electronic signatures for ballot petitions on a temporary basis due to the pandemic, so we know it can be done safely and easily.

HB1089 requires the State Board of Elections to adopt regulations to specify requirements for secure storage and use of voter data, as well as procedures for collecting electronic signatures. When electronic signatures were allowed in 2020, the SBE continued to verify electronic signatures in the same way as those affixed to paper. Electronic signatures will still be required to follow a precise process defined in SBE regulations, thus ensuring they will not be a vehicle for frivolous or fraudulent signatures.

It's time to bring the ballot petition process into the 21st Century and make this Maryland Constitutional Right accessible to all citizens. I ask for a favorable report for HB1089.

**HB1089**

Uploaded by: Samuel Jordan

Position: FAV



February 25, 2022

House Ways and Means Committee

HB 1089 – Election Law – Registered Voter List Security and Electronic Signature Requirements for Petitions

Position – Favorable

Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Washington, and Members of the Committee

The Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition (BTEC) urges you to act favorably on HB 1089.

Each day, mainstream and special niche news and social media channels record the disturbing status of democratic institutions and respect for full enfranchisement. The issue at every turn is the removal or maintenance of arbitrary obstacles and conditions that threaten the exercise of the franchise.

Electronic signature technology has been in use with proven security from fraud and misuse over a decade in business and official governmental documents and transactions. BTEC is seeking the removal of the in-person requirement blocking the use of the electronic signature protocol that has already been used in the state of Maryland for ballot access petition campaigns.

BTEC has collected over 1,000 electronic petitions with electronic signatures for submission by August 1, 2022 in meeting the 10,000 valid petition requirement for our local ballot access petition to amend the Baltimore City charter. We collected those petition signatures electronically before May 25, 2021 when the extension for use of the electronic signature protocol expired. Since then, our petition campaign has been saddled with unnecessarily oppressive labor and time-consuming logistical demands.

With our experience, only one conclusion can be drawn: The expiration of the use of the electronic signature protocol has made it difficult for those who want to support our campaign. They must now navigate a landscape marked by health advisories and personal anxieties occasioned by the once-in-a-century health crisis affecting the entire globe. They have been restricted in their exercise of the franchise.

HB 1089 is a voting rights bill. Voting rights are directly associated with the duty of government at every level to represent the will of the duly certified voter. The arbitrary expiration of this facility immediately limits and diminishes the number of duly certified voters who can register their support for or against initiatives of importance to their interests – a right for which government is established and obligated to protect.

The Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition is confident that the Committee will expedite access to the exercise of the franchise rather than obstruct its exercise. We are confident that you will heed our appeal and vote favorably for the passage of the bill.

Samuel Jordan – President – Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition

# **DRM HB 1089 testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Samuela Ansah

Position: FAV

**WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE****February 24, 2022****HB 1089 – Election Law - Registered Voter List Security and Electronic Signature Requirements for Petitions****Position: SUPPORT**

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM – formerly Maryland Disability Law Center) is the Protection & Advocacy agency in Maryland, mandated to advance the civil rights of people with disabilities. DRM works to increase opportunities for Marylanders with disabilities to be part of their communities through equal and clear access to the ballot by advocating for eliminating and reducing barriers to voting for people with disabilities.

DRM supports HB 1089 which will allow electronic signatures for ballot petitions. The State Board of Elections allowed electronic signatures to be accepted for ballot petitions from 2020-2021 as a response to the coronavirus pandemic. However, the State Board of Elections will revert back to handwritten ink petitions, which places barriers on voters with disabilities, particularly those with low vision or blind voters and other physical disabilities who can have a difficult time providing physical handwritten signatures. HB 1089 will make electronic signatures for ballot petitions a permanent solution for voters who have difficulties with providing a handwritten signature on ballot petitions.

Currently, ballot petitions require 10,000 physical handwritten signatures prior to allowing the petition to be on a ballot. Voters with disabilities required to sign petitions experience challenges providing a handwritten signature for several reasons related to their disability, especially visually impaired voters and voters who have difficulty holding a writing instrument. Only allowing physical handwritten signatures excludes voters who cannot provide a physical signature from participating fully in their local political and electoral process which is effectively silencing a whole community whose input is invaluable and necessary. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act requires that states, counties and local governments provide accommodations to allow people with disabilities full participation in the services, programs and activities they provide. Making electronic signatures a permanent fixture of ballot petitions is a reasonable accommodation for voters with disabilities which allows them full, equal, and clear participation in the electoral process.

Not only would this benefit voters with disabilities, but all voters as the pandemic required all of us to find new and innovative ways to connect through technology. Electronic signatures should remain a permanent fixture for ballot petitions. For these reasons DRM urges a favorable report on **HB 1089**.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at [samuelaa@disabilityrightsmd.org](mailto:samuelaa@disabilityrightsmd.org) or by phone at 443-356-6304

# **Testamonyhb1089.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sharon Davlin

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of HB1089

“Election Law – Registered Voter List Security and Electronic Signature 3 Requirements for Petitions”  
House Ways and Means Committee  
March 1, 2022

**FAVORABLE**

TO: Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, and members of the Ways and Means Committee  
FROM: Sharon Davlin

My name is Sharon Davlin. I am a resident of District 42A. I submit this testimony ***in support of HB 1089***. This bill require the State Board of Elections to adopt procedures for the collection of electronic signatures on ballot petitions, and regulations for the secure storage and use of voter data and of the registered voter list.

This legislation should have been enacted years ago. Too many people are left out of the ballot petition process due to work or school or being house bound. As an 82 year old with a compromised immune system, I don't open the door to people I don't know. Nor do I go out to stores or malls or meeting places where petition signatures are gathered.

In the 21st century we have the technology to allow all of us to more easily participate in the democratic process, even if we work, have a disability, or need to attend to daily responsibilities that impose limits on our time and access. This bill will allow the collection of signatures in electronic form instead of with paper and ink. The internet has dramatically changed our lives in the ways we connect with each other and conduct business. It is time it is used to broaden how all our voices are heard as well.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB 1089.

Thank you,  
Sharon Davlin  
327 Overbrook Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21212-1802  
sldavlin4@gmail.com



# **HB 1089 - Our Revolution Prince George's - FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Suchitra Balachandran

Position: FAV



Feb. 25, 2022

House Ways and Means Committee

HB 1089 – Election Law - Registered Voter List Security and Electronic Signature Requirements for Petitions

Position - Favorable

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Washington and Members of the Committee:

During the pandemic, Maryland has been in the forefront of not just maintaining, but improving voter access to the ballot in innumerable ways, including expanding mail-in ballots – which can now be requested to be permanent by the voter, and no-touch drop boxes to ensure secure and timely receipt of ballots. The Brennan Center for Justice gave us a top score along with a handful of other states for these improvements. Independently, Maryland's State Board of Elections (SBE) approved the electronic collection of signatures to place questions on the ballot and for third party ballot access on a temporary basis. SBE approved the privately set-up signature platform, which included verifying the signer via the voter database and gathering I.P. addresses to preclude hacking. The program was used successfully.

Via HB 1089, the Maryland General Assembly should make the ability to collect electronic signatures to place questions on the ballot a permanent feature and require the SBE to develop the needed protocols. This is a voting rights issue for the average citizen and an absolute necessity for citizens with disabilities and those who do not have the luxury of free time and personal private transportation. Electronic signatures are now commonly used for many secure transactions and regulations to detect and avoid fraud are easily developed.

Requirement that there be physical contact between the voter and a person holding a clipboard is not just archaic but a serious impediment to the constitutional right guaranteed to Maryland citizens. Having utilized and found to be effective, Maryland should make electronic signatures for petitions permanent. While we raise our voices against voting rights shortcomings in other states, let's make sure that Maryland is leading by example.

We ask for a favorable vote.

Submitted respectfully,

Suchitra Balachandran  
Chair, Our Revolution Prince George's