

A. Johnson - Favorable Testimony for SB 605.pdf

Uploaded by: Adrienne Johnson

Position: FAV

Ms. Adrienne Johnson - Testimony in Favor
SB 605 – Election Law – Citizens Who Live Overseas - Right to Vote
Senate Education, Energy& Environment Committee Hearing: March 14, 2023

Chair Feldman and members of the committee,

My name is Adrienne Johnson, and I am a Montgomery County voter living in the United Kingdom. Thank you for allowing me to voice my support for Senate Bill 605, the bill that would enfranchise and authorize American overseas voters to register and vote for candidates running for federal, state, and local races in the county where they last resided.

In a global economy, it is increasingly common for American citizens to live, study, and work abroad. I moved to the UK following a workplace promotion. Nevertheless, I remain proud to be a product of Montgomery County, Maryland. More importantly, I have retained deep ties to the community where I grew up, one that was also home to numerous civil servants employed across all agencies, indeed, across all levels of public service. This left a lasting impression on me. I learned the importance and power of civic engagement at an early age. Since moving abroad, I have continued to vote regularly, and am active in American politics.

Access to the ballot is a cornerstone of democracy. My family's history in Montgomery County goes back 4 generations in the Sandy Spring area, where most Quakers freed their slaves by 1820, thus creating a sizeable community of free Black Americans. The well-being of my relatives, including an elderly parent, aunts, uncles, and cousins, who still reside in the county is directly tied to decisions made by elected officials at State and local levels. This, in turn, has a direct impact on me, as the possibility of a return is ever-present and completely plausible. Whether public health-related, estate / asset-related, or otherwise, living abroad does not shield me or other Marylanders who reside abroad from the impact of legislation made by Maryland's locally elected officials, yet I have no say in electing those who make such decisions. Access to the ballot is a right of American citizenship. The power of my vote should extend beyond my federally protected right to vote for candidates running for federal office. At present, someone who only recently became a Maryland resident has more voting power than I, who has strong, and lasting ties to my home community. This is undemocratic.

The nations' big issues generally mirror local big issues. I believe the passing of SB 605 will encourage greater voter engagement by providing overseas Marylanders the broadest power of their vote. I feel it is my right and obligation to have a voice in deciding who rises through the ranks of leadership. I consider it my civic duty and I believe expanding the pool of eligible voters will contribute to a more representative pool of candidates.

Thank you to Senator Lewis Young for introducing SB 605.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Ms. Adrienne Johnson

Montgomery County Voter in the United Kingdom

Candice Kerestan - SB 605 - FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Candice Kerestan

Position: FAV

**TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
SB 605 – Election Law – Citizens Who Live Overseas - Right to Vote**

POSITION: Favorable

NAME: Candice Kerestan

HEARING DATE: March 14, 2023

Dear Committee Chair Feldman and Distinguished Committee members,

My name is Candice Kerestan, and I am calling in today from Munich, Germany. I'd like to thank you all of you for allowing me to testify remotely.

I currently serve as the State Party Chair of Democrats Abroad, one of the Democratic National Committee's 57 state parties. Democrats Abroad is the largest organization of U.S. citizens outside of the United States, and represents the millions of Americans living permanently or temporarily abroad, including many from Maryland.

At the center of our mission is ensuring that U.S. citizens overseas – regardless of party – can and do exercise their constitutional right to vote. That is why I am asking you to please support Senate Bill 605, which would allow MD voters living abroad to receive a full ballot for federal, state, and local elections.

Overseas voters – which include active duty military, military families, veterans, and civilians like myself – are guaranteed the right to vote in federal elections under current US law. The majority of US states afford all of their citizens abroad with the right to vote in state and local races. But this is not the case in Maryland. In fact, on the substantial issues this body is deliberating on today, many Maryland voters abroad do not have a voice.

Senate Bill 605 would rectify this, ensuring that Maryland citizens abroad can and do have a say in their representation at the state and local levels. Specifically, the bill foresees that ballots issued to all Maryland voters abroad include state and local races. Being able to vote is a pillar to our democracy - and both a responsibility and privilege of being a US citizen.

As I recently traveled the roads of Maryland, Governor Moore's name along with the phrase, "Leave No One Behind" stood out. In advocating for the voting rights of Marylanders living all around the world, I am asking you to not leave your overseas voters and their rights behind. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Candice Kerestan

RESIDES IN: Munich, Germany

VOTES IN: Pennsylvania

SB0605 Citizens Who Live Overseas - Right to Vote

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0605
General Assembly - Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office

Bill Sponsor: Senator Lewis Young

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0605 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.

Our members would like to ensure, as much as possible, that *their* vote for candidates for the General Assembly is what elects its members. We understand that events happen that cause a duly elected member of the General Assembly to vacate their seat between election cycles and we approve of the process of nominating and confirming a replacement. However, if a seat is vacated early in the term, the constituents of that district are essentially being represented by a person they did not elect for an extended period of time. This seems like an opportunity for change.

This bill would require the Governor to call a special election depending on when the replacement member is seated. If the legislator is seated on or before the date that is 55 days before the deadline for filing certificates of candidacy, a special election will be called. We believe that this will ensure that the replacement member will only serve out the term if it is too late to announce candidacy for the next Primary or General election.

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

SB 605 FAV Elizabeth Landry.pdf

Uploaded by: Elizabeth Landry

Position: FAV

Senate Bill 605 Hearing: March 14, 2023
Election Law – Citizens Who Live Overseas - Right to Vote
Maryland Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee
Elizabeth Landry, FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee,

My name is Elizabeth Landry. Thank you for allowing me to share my story. I vote in Frederick, but I am joining today from Sweden to share my enthusiastic support for SB 605.

I was born, raised, and received my Nursing Degree in Salisbury. Years later, love took me to Frederick. In 2018, my partner and I made the leap and we moved abroad for their work.

As it turns out, there are many Americans abroad, and I found a home in making sure they knew they could vote in our elections back home. In the four years since, I have learned many things, including an entirely new language and culture, and that I took my vote in Maryland elections for granted.

When I received my 2020 ballot, some races I was used to voting for were not there. No Board of Education, no statewide or county initiatives. I asked why this was, and was distressed to learn that many Maryland voters abroad can only vote in Federal offices. In 2022, I was only more devastated to not be able to vote for offices such as Governor or County Executive.

While in Sweden, I am disenfranchised as a Marylander and US citizen to fully vote as I did while living in Frederick. Important decisions are made at the State and Local levels on issues that impact me. For example, I am non-binary, and my future Maryland driver's license will be able to accurately reflect my gender thanks to legislation passed.

Please vote YES for SB 605, so that my voice as a US citizen in our government is the same whether I live around the corner or across an ocean.

Thank you again for the opportunity and for your time.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth "Beth" Landry, BSN, RN

RESIDES IN: Malmö, Sweden

VOTES IN: Frederick County Voter (District 3)

SB 605 H. Ganek (FAVORABLE).pdf

Uploaded by: Hillary Ganek

Position: FAV

Dr. Hillary Ganek
Testimony in Favor of Senate Bill 605
Hearing Date: March 14, 2023
Maryland Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee

Chair Feldman and members of the committee,

For the record, I am Dr. Hillary Ganek, and I vote in President Ferguson's own District 46. I am delighted to be able to speak remotely in support of Senate Bill 605 from here in Toronto today.

I moved here in 2012 to pursue my PhD in Rehabilitation Science at the University of Toronto. While here, I met my husband and last May, I gave birth to our first child. My parents still live in Bethesda, where I grew up but, due to COVID and my pregnancy, we have not been back in over three years. I am very much looking forward to sharing my home town with my son and introducing my community there to him.

Although I've been in Canada for over a decade, I am a Marylander. Having a voice in the ongoings of the country and our state is extremely important to me. I see it as a reflection of myself. Of the many issues considered by this assembly, education and healthcare are my biggest priorities. Regrettably, in the last few years I have had to divorce myself from state level politics because being denied a voice during these crucial Maryland elections is too much of a disappointment.

I have voted in primary, midterm, and general elections from Canada for many years. Receiving and completing my ballot is a point of pride and I am always sure to tell friends and family in Canada, the US, and elsewhere that I have voted. Unfortunately, as a Marylander abroad I receive a Federal-only ballot. Knowing that I am being blocked from participating in the ongoings of my own state makes me feel cut-off from the place that I still call home. I would love to have the opportunity to vote at the state and local levels, where the laws that truly govern day-to-day life are enacted.

Today, I am here in support of Senate Bill 605 because there is a light at the end of the tunnel for me as a Marylander and as a US citizen living abroad. I respectfully request this committee vote in favor of SB 605 so that I can finally resume having an equal voice in our state and local government.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Hillary Ganek, PhD
Baltimore City Voter (District 46) in Toronto, Canada

Jarryd Rauch - SB 605 - FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Jarryd Rauch

Position: FAV

**TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
SB 605 – Election Law – Citizens Who Live Overseas - Right to Vote**

POSITION: Favorable

NAME: Jarryd M. Rauch

HEARING DATE: March 14, 2023

Dear Committee Chair Feldman and Distinguished Committee members,

My name is Jarryd Rauch, and I am grateful to testify remotely today from South Korea in support of SB 605.

I am the Executive Director of Democrats Abroad. Partisan politics aside, I am intimately familiar with how dozens of states manage and facilitate the voting process for their uniformed and overseas civilian voters. To myself and all involved in the electoral process, voters being out of sight should not mean they are out of mind, or in this case, excluded from fully exercising their civic duty to vote.

While our organization is partisan, we facilitate the nonpartisan voter registration and ballot request website, VoteFromAbroad.org to ensure every American abroad can register to vote, request their absentee ballot, and get assistance they may need doing so. Much of our voter registration outreach is nonpartisan to reach as many voters as humanly possible, because every single voter and their vote matters.

You can take the Marylander out of the state, but you can't take the state out of the Marylander. Senate Bill 605 ensures every Maryland voter living abroad receives a full ballot with Federal, State and Local races so they can exercise their right to vote at all levels of government. The future of their state and all decisions made to navigate that path forward are integral and consequential for each and every one of these voters.

Many did not have a voice in the election of representation in this General Assembly, but it is the responsibility of this body to grant that all Marylanders, and US citizens, have that capability going forward.

We urge a favorable report for SB 605. Thank you for your time, and I'm glad to take questions from the committee.

Sincerely,

Jarryd M. Rauch

RESIDES AND VOTES IN: New York City, New York

SB605 Election Law - Citizens Who Live Overseas -

Uploaded by: Karen Lewis Young

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 13, 2023

SB 605 – Election Law - Citizens Who Live Overseas - Right to Vote

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Esteemed Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

I am presenting Senate Bill 605, legislation that would permit U.S. citizens and Maryland voters who reside abroad to vote in state and local elections. This effort continues to build on the important work of the Maryland General Assembly in ensuring ballot accessibility. This legislation alleviates a significant challenge faced by Maryland voters who reside abroad. Whether they are members of the uniformed services or civilians living/working outside of the country, their voting rights are currently limited. Maryland voters residing abroad depend on mail-in voting and encounter voting barriers.

SB 605 enables Maryland voters who live abroad to receive and vote a full ballot in federal, state, and local elections. Maryland law permits most voters abroad only a federal ballot. If declared their “return is uncertain,” 32 states allow their voters abroad full ballot access.

All Maryland citizens are impacted by decisions made at the state and local levels. For example, legislation debated by this General Assembly about family law, programs for veterans, medical insurance coverage, and tuition rates can directly impact these voters. Additionally, Maryland voters abroad are concerned about the issues at the state and local levels that impact their families, friends, and loved ones. They take these into account when casting their votes from their host countries.

According to the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) in their 2020 Post-Election Report to Congress, the voter participation rate for all overseas voters was eight percent, with an estimated ballot request rate of twelve percent compared to seventy-eight percent participation stateside.

FVAP notes that over half of the estimated 70% voting gap between stateside voters and overseas voters is due to obstacles to voting that are specific to the overseas voting population. This gap is defined as “the percentage of overseas citizens who wanted or tried to vote but were

unsuccessful.” They acknowledge voters may have benefitted by “state legislative changes.” SB 605 will help accomplish this.

To ensure equitable participation in our American democratic process from Maryland voters residing abroad, I urge the committee to give a favorable report for SB605.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Lewis Young". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and 'Y'.

Senator Karen Lewis Young

MTaube-SB605-EEE-testimony-14mar2023.pdf

Uploaded by: Michelle Taube

Position: FAV

**SB 605 Election Law - Citizens Who Live Overseas - Right to Vote
Testimony in Favor: Michelle Taube**

Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee
Hearing: March 14, 2023

Dear Committee Chair Feldman and distinguished Committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony. My name is Michelle Taube. I am a Montgomery County District 16 voter. In 2007, I moved to Copenhagen, Denmark to take a job at the National Museum of Denmark.

My family moved to Bethesda right before I started high school and my mother still lives there. I moved back to the area after college. I have also lived in Baltimore, and I taught in Montgomery and Frederick County public schools.

Although I have lived abroad for over 15 years now, I still travel back to Maryland at least once every year to visit family and friends. I keep up to date with news in the US and specifically in Maryland by reading and listening to online news sources, including the Washington Post and Bethesda Magazine.

I vote in every election. My friends in Denmark who vote in states as disparate as California, Mississippi, Oregon, and Montana can vote for every race on the ballot. It is important to me to also receive the full ballot because state and local issues affect my family and friends who live, work, and go to school in Maryland. Some of the issues also affect me, even though I do not live there currently. In the age of the internet, it is possible to be an informed voter, even while living across the ocean.

The last 15 years have gone by in the blink of an eye. Just because I moved abroad to take a job in my field does not mean that I feel like less of an American or a Marylander. In fact, living in another country and speaking another language makes it more important to exercise my rights and responsibilities as an American. Senate bill 605 would allow me to vote like any other Marylander.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I hope that the committee gives this bill a favorable report.

Sincerely yours,
Michelle Taube

Montgomery County District 16 voter in Denmark

SB605 Election Law-Citizens Who Live Overseas-Righ

Uploaded by: Jean Benhoff

Position: FWA

Witness: Jean Miceli Benhoff
Jurisdiction: Baltimore County
Bill: SB 0605 Election Law-Citizens Who Live Overseas-Right to Vote

Summary: For the purpose of authorizing an overseas voter to register to vote and vote in federal, State, and local elections in a certain county; prohibiting an election director from removing an individual from a statewide voter registration list under certain circumstances; and generally relating to the right to vote of citizens of the United States who live overseas.

Position: Position: FAVORABLE SUPPORT with AMENDMENT

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 does address these issues for US Citizens. There are guidelines for the Board of Elections of each and every jurisdiction in the United States to follow. I agree with Senator Young and Delegate Fair sponsoring HB0542.

Amendment Recommendation:

Referring to: *Section 3-502 –(d) and e-(1)*: Lines 13-23-Addition of the following amendment is recommended to add that the **election director shall: itself verify** that the voter has as required by federal election law to document in writing to the election director that this voter's first or any other election registration **IN ANOTHER STATE OR TERRITORY** has been cancelled in writing by this voter.

The Voter attempting to make this NEW REGISTRATION will provide this (or these) cancellations to the election director where the voter is attempting to secure a new registration.

Why is this important to the accuracy of Maryland and all 49 states?

United States Voter rolls have become bloated by inadvertent and excess registrations.

<https://thefederalist.com/2023/02/27/how-bad-is-your-state-at-managing-voter-rolls-find-out-with-this-new-database/>

SB 065 UOCAVA loosening.pdf

Uploaded by: Dana Schulze

Position: UNF

Dana Schulze
1320 Shawnee Court
Millersville, MD 21108

March 13, 2023:

Maryland General Assembly
Annapolis, MD

RE: SB 0605 Election Law - Citizens Who Live Overseas - Right to Vote

Dear Senators,

I am a combat veteran, hold a BS, and MA in counseling. I oppose HB 0605 and respectfully request that you vote against it. I fought and my friends died for our sacred vote in this Constitutional Republic. One legal citizen gets one vote, the great equalizer. American citizens living overseas already are guaranteed the ability and path to vote. I personally experienced living overseas and voting.

Election Integrity is deeply distrusted, and HB 0605 will deepen the distrust.

Due to growing non-partisan distrust in our election system, the identification of numerous apparent voting anomalies in the State of Maryland, and the documented issues pertaining to voting nationwide^{1,2}, **Over 60% of all Americans have lost Faith in our Elections.**

Polls continue to show that low voter confidence is non-partisan and it is not getting any better. Waiting for and instructing citizens to “get over it” will most likely never happen. To compound very low confidence, we are hearing more voters state they are not going to vote because they believe their vote doesn’t matter. In fact, recent Rasmussen polls³ show the severity of the issue:

- Widespread Cheating will affect Nov 2022 Election (7/7/2022) – 50% believe
- Election Integrity (8/8/2022) – 80% Concerned, 59% Very Concerned
- Election Cheating (8/22/2022) – 75% Concerned, 60% Very Concerned

From a Board of Elections perspective the 2022 turnout statistics were very disappointing. Even with all the accommodations of extended voting days and hours and a massive push for mail in voting, turnout was 16.6% lower than the 2018 Gubernatorial election. Clearly these accommodations are not inspiring more Marylanders to make their voice heard via voting! In my opinion a lack of trust in the voting system is a significant factor driving these results.

Below are the high level statewide and Anne Arundel county statistics. Two points, 1) Republican turnout decreased the least (both statewide and county) and 2) even with overwhelming mail-in ballot use by Democrats, total Republican turnout exceeded Democrat turnout by several points. Further demonstrating the bi-partisan distrust of our electoral system.

Turnout			
Statewide	2018	2022	% Chg
Total	59.06%	49.26%	-16.59%
DEM	61.53%	50.81%	-17.42%
REP	63.45%	57.60%	-9.22%
UNF	46.41%	36.64%	-21.05%

AA County			
Total	60.10%	53.69%	-10.67%
DEM	63.80%	56.52%	-11.41%
REP	63.63%	59.58%	-6.36%
UNF	47.83%	41.80%	-12.61%

This low voter confidence played out in the 2023 General election.

I was part of a group of concerned citizens who identified numerous apparent anomalies after 1) analyzing data from the 2020 General and the 2022 Primary elections and 2) canvassing 2020 General election voters in Crofton, Pasadena, and Severna Park in August 2022. A subset of the anomalies identified is included below:

- There are 1,242 recorded 2020 General election votes in Anne Arundel County for voters who have moved according to the U.S. Post Office National Change of Address (NCOA) database. 11,889 in the State
- There are 8,077 voters labeled as inactive after they voted in the 2020 General Election⁴.
73,949 in the State
- There are 520 addresses who have voters with the same date of birth and same address who voted in the 2020 General Election⁵.
5,313 in the state. Twins/Triplets that still live together?
- The number of 2022 Primary voters reported by the Secretary of State⁶ (AA: 90,413 / State: 966,228) do not match the number of 2022 Primary voters identified in the Maryland State Board of Elections Voter rolls⁷ (AA: 91,242 / State: 1,033,425)

Another issue creating distrust of elections is the voter roll discrepancies.

Registration numbers for Anne Arundel County fluctuate and differ from the state reported registration numbers tremendously.

The total Anne Arundel County registered voters listed on the 11/22/2022 Gubernatorial General Election on November 8 is listed as 406,492.

The total Anne Arundel County registered voters from the Precinct Voter Counts Report dated 11/30/2022 listed as 413,286.

October 31, 2022 is 411,972 reported by Anne Arundel County.

November 8, 2022 is 406,492 reported by the state.

November 30, 2022 is 413,342 reported by Anne Arundel County.

They use the same data set as a source, why is there such a large discrepancy of 5,480 between October 31 and November 8 and 6,794 between November 8 and November 30?

The county and state board of elections have been asked these questions.

The monthly registrations numbers are found here:

<https://www.aacounty.org/boards-and-commissions/board-of-elections/voter-registration-statistics/>

The 2022 election results are found here:

https://www.aacounty.org/boards-and-commissions/board-of-elections/election-results/Election%20Results/GG22_Election_Summary_OFFICIAL.pdf

Notes:

1. Williamson County, TN, Rumble: <https://tinyurl.com/mudz5u8e>
2. Dekalb County GA, Rumble: <https://tinyurl.com/5n8mdj7n>
3. Rasmussen Reports, <https://www.rasmussenreports.com>
4. 07/2022 Maryland State Voter Info Snapshot
5. 12/2021 Maryland State Voter Info Snapshot
6. Anne Arundel 2022 Gubernatorial Primary Election Summary Report, <https://tinyurl.com/bdz42tr6>
7. 08/2022 Maryland State Voter Info Snapshot