
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