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Testimony of Delegate Samuel I. Rosenberg

Before the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

in Support of

House Bill 130

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

*“The vote is precious. It is the most powerful non-violent tool we have in a democratic society, and we must use it.” - Congressman John Lewis*

Mister Chairman and Members of the Committee:

As we have seen in recent election cycles, the possibility of interference with an election by a hostile foreign government is a looming threat to our democracy. While such threats may take a variety of forms, House Bill 130 focuses on ensuring the safety and integrity of our election equipment.

This legislation would require election service providers to alert the State Board of Elections if components of their election systems are either manufactured or modified abroad. In particular, election service providers would be required to report on the nature of any manufacturing or modifications to election systems or components, the country in which the work was done, and any measures taken to protect the security of the equipment while it was abroad.

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

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 parties listed above of the contract termination and the reasons for the termination.

HB 130 is vital to safeguarding the security of our elections. Even the possibility of interference with election components undermines faith in the democratic process. This bill addresses the real and perceived fears of foreign intervention in our voting systems.

This bill has passed the House of Delegates for four consecutive years. It is derived from H.R. 1, the For the People Act of 2021. The lead sponsor of that federal legislation, Congressman John Sarbanes commended this legislation as a “common-sense reform to ensure the integrity of Maryland election systems.”

I urge a favorable report on HB 130.

March 22, 2023