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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB860: State Administrator of Elections - Contract Procurement Transparency

Education, Energy, Environment (& Elections!) Committee

Friday, March 3, 2023 1PM

SBE Procurement Transparency ([SB860](#)) would require the Administrator of the State Board of Elections (SBE) to disclose **all** proposed Requests for Proposals (RFPs) or Invitation for Bids to the SBE. Any RFP or bid expected to have a value of over \$200,000 must be debated and voted on by the Board of Elections before the application process can begin. Likewise, any contract over \$200,000 must be considered and approved by the Board before being submitted to the Board of Public Works.

“Procurement” may sound like a purely administrative function, but it determines vital components of our electoral systems, such as:

- Which [voting machines are selected](#);
- Printing Voter Registration cards;
- Who will [print ballots](#) for Maryland voters;
- The [training](#) of election judges;
- Sorting & delivering mail-in ballots;
- Who conducts [election audits](#);
- ... and more!

As a matter of fiscal responsibility, the bipartisan SBE Board **must** have a say in how and where Maryland taxpayers’ money is spent. Although the Board of Public Works already approves large State contracts, its members may not have the same level of elections expertise as the SBE Board. This bill enacts a simple fix to initial SBE Board approval and accountability to ensure that RFPs are only undertaken with appropriate oversight.

Sunlight and transparency are the best ways to maintain voter confidence in our electoral system. Disclosure of contracts and large RFPs to the Board will enhance public access to this information through live-streamed SBE meetings and guarantee that the [variety of problems](#) experienced in the 2020 elections do not reoccur.

I urge a favorable report on SB860.