

SB 488 Election Law - Electronic Ballot Return System - Study and Request for Proposals
TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Elizabeth Landry, Favorable with Amendment

February 24, 2023

Dear Committee Chair Feldman and Distinguished Committee members,

My name is Elizabeth Landry. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am here in support of SB 488, and I want to thank Senator Brooks for sponsoring this bill. I live abroad in Sweden, and I vote in Frederick.

I was born, raised, and received my Nursing degree in Salisbury. At the end of 2018, my partner and I moved abroad to Sweden for their work. Maryland voters like me are dependent on mailing in our ballots. Fortunately, I am able to receive my ballot by email, but as a Maryland voter I must return my ballot by postal mail.

In 2020, postal systems around the world were upended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With so much uncertainty around the length of time postal mail would require, I ended up paying a courier service to make sure my ballot was returned by the deadline – this cost over \$50. Having to pay this much just to vote was a modern-day poll tax.

Having the ability to electronically return my ballot would save me money and stress of worrying whether or not my ballot will make it back to Maryland. Additionally, Maryland voters abroad are not always as privileged as I to have a reliable postal mail system where they live. Maryland voters who may live in Central America or Oceania may not be able to mail their ballot back, or the cost may be prohibitive and they decide they cannot afford to vote.

I am grateful for the study outlined in SB 488, and my position is Favorable with an Amendment requesting the inclusion of a public forum available online so that Maryland voters living overseas can give input on how such an electronic ballot return system would improve their ability to vote from their host countries.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to the committee and for your time.

Respectfully Yours,

Elizabeth Landry

RESIDES IN: Malmö, Sweden

VOTES IN: Frederick County Voter (District 3)