



## Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

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House Ways and Means Committee

**HB 645: Election Law – Electronic Ballot Return System – Study and Request for Proposals**

**February 28, 2023**

**Position: Support**

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) is an independent, public policy organization that creates changes to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. People with developmental disabilities and their families lead the DD Council. **From that perspective, the DD Council supports HB 645 because the potential increase in options for voting helps people with disabilities.**

### **WHAT does this legislation do?**

HB 645 requires:

- The Department of Legislative Service, in consultation with experts in the disability rights and military communities, to complete a study on the creation of an electronic ballot system.
- The study to include the impact on voters with disabilities and service members; best practices for electronic ballot return systems; implementation; the cost; and whether changes to the existing processes are needed.

### **WHY is this legislation important?**

- All Marylanders must have equitable access to their fundamental right to vote.
- All Marylanders, including those with disabilities must be able to vote easily and privately, and fairly participate in the electoral process.
- Twelve states already introduced electronic ballot return.

SB 488 is an important step to ensure that people with disabilities have the options and opportunities necessary to exercise their fundamental right to vote. For that reason, the DD Council supports HB 645.

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