

DANA JONES
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Anne Arundel County

Ways and Means Committee

Secretary, Women's Caucus

Vice Chair, Anne Arundel
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Delegate Dana Jones
Before the Ways and Means Committee**

**In Support of HB 951
Election Law – Election Officials and Workers – Prohibitions Against Interference and
Disclosure of Personal Information
February 28, 2023, 1pm**

Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Wilkins, and fellow members of the Ways and Means Committee,

For the record - I am Delegate Dana Jones.

I come before you today to introduce a bill that would expand prohibitions on interfering with election workers, make it illegal to publish the personal information of our election workers or their families, and establish a process through which election workers can request for their public information to be hidden from public view.

Recently, our country has experienced a disturbing rise in political extremism and violence. Less than two weeks before the 2022 elections, the Department of Homeland Security released a bulletin warning of a “heightened threat” of violence. Specifically, they cautioned that potential targets of domestic violent extremism include: “candidates running for public office, elected officials, and election workers...”.

This warning is extremely concerning, and understandably worrisome to those who work as election officials as well as those who have considered it.

According to a survey published by the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University Law School, 1 in 5 election officials are unlikely to continue serving through 2024. As we discuss the problem of election worker recruitment and retention, we must take into account the safety of our officials.

HB 951 is meant to address these issues, and make our elections, and especially those critical to its function, safer. This bill expands the definition of interfering with an election official, and increases the criminal penalty for doing so. Additionally, this legislation will criminalize the act of “doxing” election officials. Making it illegal to publish the personal information of an election official or an immediate member of their family. And finally, HB 951 creates an avenue for election officials who have been directly threatened to request their personal information be hidden from public view.

I have worked with SDAT and the amendment office to introduce an amendment to encompass election workers into the Secretary of State’s SafeAtHome program, in order to lower costs associated with this bill's implementation. I am proud to author HB 951, and I believe we must act

preemptively to protect our election officials in an unfortunately increasingly polarized and violent political atmosphere.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on this bill.



Delegate Dana Jones