

BRIAN GRIFFITHS

February 17, 2023

The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbeary
Chair, Ways and Means Committee
Room 131
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Madam Chair and members of the Committee,

I write to you today in **opposition** of **House Bill 643** Election Law - Insufficient Number of Candidates for a Primary Election. I truthfully believe this bill is an answer in search of a problem.

For what purpose does extending the filing deadline for one week serve? Candidates have nearly one full calendar year available to them to file for office. How will an extra week make a candidate or potential candidate suddenly decide that they will file for office?

Furthermore, there is already a process available to Central Committees to fill vacancies in instances where no candidates file for office. In the 2022 primary election, 27 candidates were designated by their Central Committees in instances when no candidate filed for the Democratic Party or Republican Party nominations. This process does not seem to be one that needs immediate replacing.

If the concern of the sponsors is to ensure that voters have a choice in who the nominee of their party is, I would urge them to reconsider. There are two ways that this can be done:

- Legislation that would allow for write-in votes in primary elections; and,
- Legislation that would require the State Board of Elections and local Boards of Election to count the number of write-in votes for all individuals in primary and general elections regardless of their status as an official candidate.

While I understand the concern that some candidates are not selected by voters, this is not the solution to make that work. I urge you to **vote no** on **House Bill 643**.

Respectfully,

