

Philip Eanes - Favorable

Maryland House Ways & Means Committee Testimony

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

February 28, 2023

Dear Committee Chair Atterbeary and House Ways & Means Committee,

My name is Philip Eanes, I vote in Elkton, and I am grateful to be able to share my support for House Bill 645 with you today from where I live here in Türkiye. This is especially true as you might imagine due to recent earthquakes here. Fortunately my family and I are safe and well.

I moved abroad for my work, and have additionally lived in Jordan and Russia. My father and other relatives are still in the U.S., and I try to visit home at least once a year. When I retire, I am planning to do so in Maryland.

Voting in Maryland is important for me because I want to keep my ties to the state and ensure that the state is stronger with my voice. Both local and statewide issues are of importance to me, because my loved ones still live there and I hope to return there someday. If I will end up living in that community, I want my voice to be heard and vote in every election.

I am still very incensed about my attempt to vote in our recent 2022 Midterm elections. I say attempt, because the situation was a disaster. My ballot was opened during transit at a mail processing facility in Tennessee. Due to this failure of the postal system, my Maryland ballot was not counted. I feel that if mail in ballots cannot be guaranteed delivery, even with a private company, how many other Marylanders will lose their voice? I'm sure many Marylanders also send in their ballots because they are unable to leave home, are unable to vote in person, or due to other circumstances.

Senate Bill 488 requires a study on the impact and best practices for implementing electronic return of ballots for Maryland voters like me. My voice and my vote in Maryland's government at all levels is important. If the option had existed in Maryland to return ballots by secure electronic means in the last cycle, I believe that my ballot would have both arrived and been counted.

Please pass SB 488 so that my ability to successfully vote in future elections is no longer an apprehension and futile cost paid. Thank you for the opportunity to share my story and for your time.

Sincerely,

Philip Eanes

VOTES FROM: Türkiye

VOTING DISTRICT: Cecil County Voter (District 36)