

Written Testimony in support of HB 112 with amendments

I'm writing this testimony as a co-organizer of Allies for Democracy, a Baltimore County based grassroots voter-mobilization group founded in 2018. We and our volunteers participate in get out the vote efforts in Maryland and Pennsylvania, and have collected hundreds of signatures on petitions for ballot initiatives in Baltimore County, among other initiatives.

We support HB 112 with amendments.

Our volunteers frequently found that people who were interested in signing the petition were reluctant to share their personal details on a form that would be visible to others. Many asked to sign an electronic version, as that is the modern expectation. Finally, many people we approached were nervous and unsure about how to sign their names in a way that would be acceptable to election officials. Ultimately, the outdated requirements of the petition gathering process effectively shut out many people from participating in their right to petition their government.

HB 112 would overcome these various barriers.

The Electronic petition signature option should be made available because the technology already exists and it reflects the way most disabled people, seniors, and busy young adults wish to live, assuring each a greater opportunity to read and fully understand proposed petition language. It is faster, more convenient, far more accurate than paper petitions, and far less costly on local election state time and effort.

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