

Ms. Sabrina Gren
House Bill 645 - Testimony in Favor
Maryland House Ways and Means Committee

February 28, 2023

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Esteemed Committee members,

My name is Sabrina Gren, and I am a Montgomery County voter living in Germany. I moved here with my former husband and our daughter at the end of 2018. As a former military spouse, we moved several times over the years with Maryland as where we last lived before moving overseas.

I am relatively new to the voting process, having become a naturalized citizen in October 2021. I take pride in voting, and in doing so having my voice heard on the issues that matter to me and my family. This is the first time I have ever gotten involved in the advocacy process, but it feels good to be able to share how a potential law change will benefit me directly with the representatives who work so diligently for all of Maryland's constituents.

To address my personal voting experience: most of the process for voting from abroad in Maryland has been relatively easy. I am appreciative for how detailed the Board of Elections voting instructions are to follow. That said, it can be somewhat confusing to actually return my ballot back by postal mail. This includes making sure that everything, such as on the envelope itself, has the necessary elements for the German and US postal systems. It is important to me that my ballot is accepted, both by the postal service and the Board of Elections.

If House Bill 645 passes and a secure electronic ballot return system is implemented, this will make a huge difference for me as a Maryland voter in Germany. I will be able to focus more on voting and less on the uncertainty that the mail will get my ballot back. It will also help me get the voting process completed faster as I know I don't have to worry about the extra trip to the postal office which as a full time working single mother it helps! Another added benefit of this would be eliminating the cost of postal mail itself which from overseas can be a significant extra cost.

I am thankful for the opportunity to share my voting experience and perspective with the Ways and Means Committee, as well as to Delegate Feldmark for introducing House Bill 645. If passed, hopefully Maryland voters and US citizens abroad like me will have the ability in future elections to electronically submit our ballots.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ms. Sabrina Gren
Montgomery County Voter in Germany