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Baltimore City

Health and Government Operations
Committee

Chair

Health Occupations and
Long-Term Care Subcommittee

House Chair

Joint Committee on Administrative,
Executive, and Legislative Review



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Testimony of Delegate Samuel I. Rosenberg

Before the House Ways and Means Committee

in Support of

House Bill 410

Election Reform Act of 2023

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

Imagine the staff of your local board of elections being overwhelmed with public information requests in the weeks before Election Day and struggling to complete preparations for the election. And then imagine the polling place where you have voted for years being moved to a new location – one without parking.

Both events occurred in the last election cycle in Maryland, frustrating election workers and voters and disrupting the election process.

Boards of elections, in particular, fielded multiple, exhaustive information requests in the months leading up to the 2022 election. For example, the Maryland State Board of Elections received requests for extensive information on the 2022 gubernatorial primary and general elections, including:

- Voting machine opening and closing reports and memory stick serial numbers,
- Voting machine and ballot marking device tamper tape numbers,
- Provisional voter sign-in sheets,
- Audited campaign finance reports,
- Lists of election workers at each polling place,
- Election day logs from chief judges at each polling place,
- Evaluations of training programs for polling place workers, and
- Voter evaluations of polling places.

Across the country, boards of election were swamped by hundreds of comparably sweeping public information requests in the late summer and early fall of 2022, just as they were finalizing arrangements for voting.

House Bill 410 seeks to prevent such incidents from impeding election staff and voters in future elections. The bill would prohibit a board of elections from changing the location of a polling place without providing an opportunity for affected individuals and organizations to be heard at a public meeting. At the same time, it would permit boards of elections to postpone responding to public information requests received during the period beginning 90 days before an election until after the election results are certified, if responding sooner would impair preparations for the election.

This legislation would also extend the existing prohibition on an individual willfully or knowingly influencing or attempting to influence through illegal means a voter's decision to go to the polls to include the newer options of voting by mail or by drop box. This component of the bill provides a common-sense update to our current election laws to reflect increasingly popular voting choices.

I urge a favorable report on HB 410.

February 14, 2023