

As the Mayor of Mount Airy (pop: 9,700), I would like to endorse HB509, for the following reasons:

- 1) We have lost our small town local newspaper during the Covid years, therefore the print media that was available to keep citizens informed of truly local issues, such as municipal elections, no longer exists.
- 2) Mount Airy sits at the edge of 4 counties. Therefore, we are not adequately covered by the County papers (Carroll County Times and Frederick News Post) on most local issues, such as our municipal elections.
- 3) All citizens (including many elderly) are transitioning to the internet for all news regarding our local elections, and therefore are becoming reliant on social media and websites for updates and reports of our local elections.
- 4) The State, imo, should step up to fill the void of all municipality's degraded, or lost printed media and provide a resource for citizens to relatively quickly see municipal election results on the internet.
- 5) The State should also, imo, maintain a visible, transparent history of the municipal elections and keep them posted (available) for review so citizens may reference them in future municipal elections.

I fully support HB509 and believe it is critical in our post-Covid environment and the citizen's transition to a reliance on the internet including websites and social media. This will enhance research of candidates past performance, keep citizens informed and fill a void as printed media continues to unfortunately, substantially degrade.