

January 31, 2023

Testimony on HB 177
Elections - Ballot Questions - Publication of Proposed Laws
Ways & Means

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland is in favor of HB 177. The bill would require the State and local boards of elections to post in a manner widely accessible to the public the complete text of certain proposed ballot questions for at least 65 days before the General Election.

The public can only benefit from increased access and transparency within our legislative process, especially when it comes to the decisions that could have an effect on them and their communities. And for those who choose to vote in person, the public posting of ballot questions gives voters another opportunity to familiarize themselves with the issues before they step to the ballot box on Election Day.

One friendly amendment we would urge the committee to adopt is a plain language requirement, to ensure that the information being communicated is clear, concise, and understandable to the average member of the public.

Increased access and transparency around ballot questions will lead to a more informed electorate, and for that reason we request a favorable report.