TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
HB 542 – Election Law – Citizens Who Live Overseas – Right to Vote

POSITION: Favorable

BY: Jarryd Rauch

HEARING DATE: February 14, 2023

Committee Chair Atterbeary and Distinguished Committee members,

My name is Jarryd Rauch, and I live in New York City. Thank you for allowing me to speak.

I am the Executive Director of Democrats Abroad, and prior to that worked with the DNC Association of State Democratic Committees liaising for the Eastern Region. Partisan politics aside, I am intimately familiar with how dozens of states manage and facilitate the voting process for their uniformed and overseas civilian voters. To myself and all involved in the electoral process, voters being out of sight should not mean they are out of mind, or in this case, excluded from fully exercising their civic duty to vote. Personally and professionally, I support House Bill 542.

While our organization is partisan, we facilitate the nonpartisan voter registration and ballot request website, VoteFromAbroad.org to ensure every American abroad can register to vote, request their absentee ballot, and get assistance they may need doing so. Much of our voter registration outreach is nonpartisan to reach as many voters as humanly possible, because every single voter and their vote matters.

You can take the Marylander out of the state, but you can't take the state out of the Marylander. HB 542 ensures every Maryland voter living abroad receives a full ballot with Federal, State and Local races so they can exercise their right to vote at all levels of government. The future of their state and all decisions made to navigate that path forward are integral and consequential for each and every one of these voters.

Many did not have a voice in the election of representation in this General Assembly, but it is the responsibility of this body to grant that all Marylanders, and US citizens, have that capability going forward.

We urge a favorable report for HB 542. Thank you for your time, and I'm glad to take questions from the committee.

Sincerely,

Jarryd M. Rauch

RESIDES AND VOTES IN: New York City, New York