



**House Bill 410**  
*Election Reform Act of 2023*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Ways and Means Committee

Date: February 14, 2023

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 410. This bill sets reasonable parameters to govern changes to polling place locations and protect local boards of elections against dubious, coordinated Public Information Act requests, which can paralyze preparations for primary and general elections.

This bill would prohibit a local board of elections from changing the location of a polling place without first holding a public meeting to discuss the proposed change and providing an opportunity for interested individuals and organizations to testify on the proposed change at the meeting. The local board would be required to maintain a contact list of certain elected officials and neighborhood groups to be informed of proposed changes, if more than 21 days before an election.

In addition, the bill authorizes the State Board of Elections and local boards of elections to temporarily deny a Public Information Act request within 90 days of a primary or general election and until certification if the custodian believes the request would impair the ability of the board to prepare for an election. This limited, practical exception from standard “open request” policy is a warranted trade-off to ensure proper election conduct.

An essential function of Maryland’s county governments is to fund and oversee elections, which proved challenging amidst the pandemic. HB 410 provides necessary and timely policy changes that balance the shared goals of providing fair, open, and transparent elections. Accordingly, MACo requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 410.