

To: the House Ways and Means Committee Members
Re: **HB 1112 - (Election Law - Ballot Petition Modernization Act)**
Request: **Favorable Report with Amendments**

My name is Peta Richkus and I live in District 42A. I am writing to ask for your support of HB 1112, which is will

- Repeal the requirement that, to sign a petition, an individual sign the individual's name in a certain form;
- Require that information requested from an individual signing a petition that is not required under certain provisions of law be marked as optional on a petition signature page;
- Alter the circumstances under which signatures on a petition must be validated and counted or invalidated;
- Authorize the curing of petition signatures under certain circumstances; and
- Authorize the use of electronic signatures on a petition.

The right to vote is guaranteed in the Maryland Constitution, and this bill makes that right more broadly accessible to people with disabilities, seniors, transit-dependent individuals and working people, all of whom may have challenges signing a petition in person.

We have the technology to allow all of us to more easily participate in the democratic process. This bill will allow the collection of signatures in electronic form instead of with paper and ink. The internet has dramatically changed our lives in the ways we connect with each other and conduct business. It is time it is used to broaden how all our voices are heard as well.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB 1112 with the following friendly amendments:

AMENDMENT 1 - SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2023.

Change the implementation date of HB1112 from October 1 to June 1, which is what it was on last year's bill, HB 1089. This would also make HB1112 consistent with HB 0645 (the "Election Law - Electronic Ballot Return System - Study and Request for Proposals", which requires the same type of technology usage study be conducted by the State Board of Elections and completed by the end of 2023.

AMENDMENT 2 - 6-208.1. 17 (A) IN AN EFFORT TO ASSURE TRANSPARENCY IN THE PETITION PROCESS, A PETITION SPONSOR SHALL BE GIVEN THE RIGHT TO SUBMIT ONE TENTH OF THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF REQUIRED SIGNATURES TO THE LOCAL BOARD OF ELECTIONS FOR REVIEW AND FEEDBACK REGARDING THE SUFFICIENCY OF SIGNATURES COLLECTION IN AN EFFECT TO ASSURE ACCURACY AND COMPLETENESS OF ALL ADDITIONAL SIGNATURES.

Thank you for your consideration,
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