

February 21, 2024

Testimony on SB 824
Election Law – Absentee Ballot Application – Sending to Eligible Voters Before Primary
Elections
Education, Energy, and the Environment

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland supports SB 824 which would require that local boards of elections send a mail-in ballot request form to eligible voters who have not opted into the permanent mail-in ballot program. The request form is to be sent at least 60 days before each primary election.

According to the State Board of Elections, about 27% of voters who voted in the 2022 general election chose to vote by mail and almost 640,000 mail-in voting packets were sent to voters. These individuals requested or opted into the permanent mail list since ballots were not automatically mailed to voters like during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the primary method of voting continues to be in person, the number of individuals choosing to vote by mail has significantly increased. Request forms being sent to voters played a role in the boost of those choosing to continue using this method.

The mail-in voting program boosted participation in the previous two elections cycles and is essential for those unable to vote in person. SB 824 would maintain the practice of mailing request forms which will remind voters that they can conveniently and securely participate in our elections while remote.

We urge a favorable report.