



People On the Go of Maryland and The Arc Maryland

SB 802

**Election Law - Voters with Disabilities -
Electronic Ballot Return
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

Requiring the State Board of Elections to establish a process by which an individual with disabilities may return a marked absentee ballot to a local board of elections electronically.

Position: Support with Amendments

February 21, 2024

Written by Mat Rice

People On the Go of Maryland

Honorable Chairperson, and distinguished members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

People On the Go of Maryland (POG) is a statewide self-advocacy organization, ran for and by those with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD), and our mission is to promote self-advocacy throughout the state.

The Arc Maryland is a statewide advocacy organization that is dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights of individuals with IDD, and supporting people and their families to thrive.

In coordination with The Arc Maryland, we offer this joint written testimony regarding SB 802.

Both organizations, People On the Go of Maryland and The Arc Maryland, believe in promoting the civil rights of all people with disabilities, regardless of the level of support someone may need, to participate in community or civic life. There is no greater aspect of that civic life than a person's ability to exercise their right to vote.

We appreciate the Sponsors of this bill for bringing the option of an electronic ballot forward. We believe SB 802 will make it easier for people with disabilities to exercise their right to vote, because they will not have to vote in person.

Voters will be able to receive, complete, and save their ballot electronically and then physically return the ballot saved on a flash drive (or other digital storage device) provided by the State Board of Elections. The amendments will make electronic ballot voting accessible for those who need an accommodation and also ensure that individuals with disabilities maintain their right to ballot secrecy.

With these changes made, Maryland will be a more inclusive state, and people will be able to exercise their right to vote with greater autonomy than ever before.

With these changes, People On the Go Maryland and The Arc Maryland respectfully advise a favorable report for SB 802 as amended.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions. Please contact Mat Rice.

Thank you,
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