



Maryland Association of Election Officials

Representing the Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland

Thank you, Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Committee Members:

My name is Ruie Lavoie, Vice President of the Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) and the Director of the Baltimore County Board of Elections. On behalf of MAEO, I am honored to testify in support of the Protecting Election Officials Act.

This legislation is not only timely but personal for me. During the 2022 election cycle, I was threatened and having had that experience gives me a unique perspective. I now place the safety of my staff, election judges, my Board and our families first when establishing policy and procedures in my office.

After receiving the threat, I witnessed firsthand and was overwhelmingly thankful for the protection from my County, the FBI and Homeland Security. Receiving a threat has a lasting effect. This legislation will work in concert to help stop threats and ensure the safety and security of those at the forefront of preserving our democratic processes.

Election officials, from administrators to election judges, dedicate themselves to the administration of fair, free, accurate and transparent elections. We are struggling with recruitment, not only hiring election judges but filling vacancies in our election offices. We work long hours, under intense scrutiny and increasingly, under the cloud of personal risk. The escalation of threats against us is deeply concerning and an affront to the principles of democracy that we all hold dear.

Senate Bill 480 addresses these concerns head-on, it establishes legal protections, sending a clear message that Maryland stands firmly against intimidation and violence, protecting those who serve our democracy from any form of intimidation or harm.

This legislation will help to safeguard election officials, providing legal protections which underscores our collective commitment to maintaining the integrity of the election process and public trust in our electoral system.

We appreciate the Governor's support of this Bill and ask the Committee to favorably report Senate Bill 480.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical matter.

Ruie Marie Lavoie

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Local Leadership Council Executive Committee, US Election Assistance Commission

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