

Molander, Sharon

From: AA_EHE
Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2024 8:57 AM
To: Molander, Sharon
Subject: FW: HB0333- ELECTION DISINFORMATION, IMPROPER INFLUENCE RELATED TO VOTING

*Karen Sider/Committee Receptionist
Maryland General Assembly
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
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From: Katherine Adelaide <adelaide_associates@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 6:17 PM
To: AA_EHE <AA_EHE@mlis.state.md.us>
Subject: HB0333- ELECTION DISINFORMATION, IMPROPER INFLUENCE RELATED TO VOTING

Dear Senate Education, Energy and Environmental Committee Members:

Although I encountered technical difficulties trying to testify virtually, I do appreciate the opportunity to attempt to do so. I made it into the waiting room, could hear my name being called and could see the hearing, but was unable to unmute and turn my video on. I called in and let staff know, and they said I could email my comments.

I'm concerned about HB0333 for the following reasons:

1. Use of the term "Disinformation."

I understand its' use as a dictionary word because, unlike "misinformation," the dictionary includes an intent to deliberately mislead with false information. However and unfortunately, ever since the 2020 election, the term "Disinformation" has been politicized and is now a highly charged partisan word used almost exclusively by the liberal media to target the free speech rights of republicans, libertarians, patriots and others.

2. The SBA maintaining a portal on their website so that the public can report said "Disinformation" is an unethical partisan "Dog Whistle" by one political group against another which will increase division rather than provide objective standards of review for true criminal behavior.

Will the definition of "Disinformation" in the bill be included on the portal of the SBOE website? Who will interpret and decide what the definition includes and does not include?

Requiring the SBOE, which is supposed to be nonpartisan, serving all the citizens of Maryland, regardless of party affiliation, to display "DISINFORMATION," even with a definition, may compromise the integrity and credibility of the SBOE. I guarantee you as a Republican that this bill if passed will signal an open field day against Republicans concerned with Election Integrity in Maryland and that very few, if any, Republicans will file a complaint in such a portal, except maybe to complain about the portal itself as a political tool against free speech.

Furthermore, a bill like this smacks of grooming citizens to spy on and report on each other to a government agency, which seems reminiscent of Hitler's Germany, whereby the ordinary citizenry was weaponized against their fellow citizens by just such "divide and conquer" reporting techniques.

The potential for a wave of democrats and RINOS reporting alleged "disinformation" against Republicans like myself and other who are tasked with monitoring elections, especially the 2024 election, for fairness and transparency and subsequent possible government overreach far outweighs any potential benefit of this bill. I am certain there are already enacted laws that would cover any true instances of deliberate, "criminal" misinformation.

3. The SBOE's periodic review of complaints filed in their portal will take a lot of time and cost taxpayer money. I filed two complaints 2 years ago during 2022 election and have not had either complaint resolved.

4. It is one thing to issue "corrective information" in response to a citizen allegation, but quite another to refer a case to the Office of the State Prosecutor for criminal prosecution. This provision smacks of "LAWFARE," the use of legal systems and institutions to damage or de-legitimize an opponent, or to deter an individual's use of their legal rights, especially free speech.

In addition to the above reasons, this type of bill will further erode the two-party system in Maryland, and so I am asking for an unfavorable report. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Katherine Adelaide, JD, Member,
Carroll County Republican Central Committee (CCRCC)
Chair, Election Integrity Subcommittee
301-575-4889

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