



People on the Go of Maryland

HB 164

Election Law - Mail-In Ballots

List of Email Addresses and Telephone Numbers

Requiring the State Board of Elections or a local board of elections, on request of a candidate, to provide the candidate with a list of registered voters who have requested an absentee ballot for an upcoming election; and requiring that the list of absentee voters provided include the email address and telephone number of each voter on the list, if the information is available.

Position: Opposed

January 25, 2024

Sponsored by Delegate R. Long

Assigned to House Ways And Means

Written by Mat Rice

Executive Director - People On the Go of Maryland

Honorable Chairperson, and distinguished members of the House Ways and Means 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..

It is in furtherance of this mission, that People On the Go provides this written testimony and respectful opposition to House Bill 164 (HB 164).

While we can appreciate the need for keeping our elections secure, our organization has identified several ways HB 164, should it become law, would achieve exactly the opposite effect.

If the state board of elections provides a political candidate with the list of people that have requested an absentee ballot (or, as it is more commonly referred to, a mail-in ballot), that list of names, email addresses, and phone numbers would, potentially, also be available to the candidate's staff, and anyone else within the candidate's sphere of influence.

Ultimately, such a practice could be ripe for security leaks and abuse, and subsequent exposure to persons whose knowledge of the information would be highly inappropriate.

It is People On the Go's contention that by providing this information for no specified purpose, we needlessly risk subjecting people with disabilities, the elderly, and other marginalized groups (all of whom may be more likely to vote by mail) to possible intimidation and/or coercion, similar to threats we have already seen perpetrated upon citizens in other states.

Furthermore, we risk infringing upon the right of an individual to have privacy when exercising their right to vote, by potentially denying them the right to a secret ballot.

For all of these reasons, People On the Go strongly advises an unfavorable report for HB 164. Thank you for your consideration.

Should you have any questions. Please contact Mat Rice.

Thank you,

Mat Rice, Executive Director

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