



# Maryland State Board of Elections

## **HB 459 – (Delegate D. Jones) Election Administration – State Administrator, Local Boards, and Election Directors**

The State Board of Elections would like to offer support for HB459 - Election Administration - State Administrator, Local Boards and Election Directors.

### Purpose:

1. Requires the State Board of Elections to evaluate the performance of the State Administrator of Election.
2. Requires the State Administrator to provide a performance evaluation of the election director of each local board of elections to the local board, including any recommended disciplinary actions for failure to comply with State law, regulations, and policies.
3. Requires each local board to confer with the State Administrator in appointing an election director, maintain a warehouse, and provide for early voting center expenses.
4. Requires, rather than authorizes, election directors to take certain actions.
5. Requires election directors to take certain security and notification actions related to voting system equipment and its storage and to perform duties as delegated by the local board.

This bill brings greater accountability and transparency regarding the work performed by the State Administrator and Local Election Directors. This legislation highlights the importance of maintaining accountability and openness in following State laws, regulations and process to instill greater confidence and trust in electoral administration.

First, the proposed legislation would codify a provision in the bylaws of the State Board to regularly evaluate the performance of the State Administrator. Additionally, the proposed legislation requires a yearly performance evaluation for all local election directors by the State Administrator to present to the local board of elections.

Regular evaluations help to identify any areas of improvement, highlight successes and maintain a high level of accountability. The proposed legislation does not usurp or interfere in the powers of the local boards of elections of direct oversight but provides key and valuable input from the State Administrator on the execution of their duties in an objective manner from a subject matter expert. The proposed legislation fosters greater communication between the Local Board members and the State Administrator to ensure that election directors are meeting the requirements of State law and regulations. Moreover, the input from the State Administrator on the hiring criteria would be a valuable resource to the local board of elections.

Finally, this bill establishes a 24-hour notification requirement that would help ensure the State Administrator can maintain situational awareness of security concerns that may have statewide impacts. The bill highlights the critical nature of ensuring that the voting system and election items are adequately secured in election offices and warehouses. Elections are part of the Department of Homeland Security's Critical Infrastructure program, so these security notifications enhance the overall posture of Maryland Elections.

We encourage favorable passage of this legislation.

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**W&M 2/13/2024**