

Dear **Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore. We are also working in collaboration with Out for Justice. I am a resident of 43A. **I am testifying in support of SB0647, the Voting Rights for All Act.**

It is time for Maryland to take the final step and make sure that **every adult Marylander** has the ability to vote. The idea that people who have been convicted of a crime should be barred from voting is deeply undemocratic. In addition, the historic over-prosecution of Black communities means that this is the group most widely disenfranchised by laws which bar people convicted of felonies from voting. Over the past two decades, Maryland has taken important steps toward fixing these inequities. In 2007, the MGA passed legislation letting people convicted of felonies vote once their sentence was completed, and in 2016, that was expanded to include people who had completed any term of imprisonment.

HB0710 would, first and foremost, re-enfranchise our fellow citizens who are serving sentences. It would also require the State Board of Elections to establish a voter hotline for incarcerated persons, to allow them to request information about voting and assist them in exercising their right to do so. This will ensure that despite not having free access to the internet and other resources, people who are incarcerated can still meaningfully exercise their right to vote. Any costs associated with the hotline should be at least partially offset by the costs saved when the Board of Elections no longer has to monitor criminal convictions across several courts and ensure people who are convicted of felonies are removed from the rolls.

Maryland should close the book on the racist legacy of felon disenfranchisement once and for all. It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of SB0647, the Voting Rights for All Act.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Katherine Grasso  
2507 N. Howard Street, Apt 415  
Baltimore, MD 21218  
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore



**Showing Up for Racial Justice**