

February 26, 2025

Testimony on SB 323
Election Law – Statewide Voter Registration Application – Prepaid Postage
Education, Energy, and the Environment

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland is in support of SB 323, which would require the State Board of Election to include a pre-addressed return envelope, including prepaid postage, with any statewide voter registration application.

Maryland already provides return postage for voters who utilize absentee or mail-in ballots and wish to return those ballots through the postal system. This legislation would simply extend that practice to voter registration applications, which an eligible individual can download and print from the State Board of Election website.

During this past election cycle, we saw many voters taking advantage of same-day registration. We fought hard to make this possible, and while we're glad that people are taking advantage of the opportunity to make their voice heard, same-day registration should always only be used as a last resort. We should be proactive and working to ensure interested eligible potential voters are registered far in advance of the election. This will alleviate some of the pressure from the same-day registration judges.

Making available a foldable envelope similar to what's included with electronic ballot delivery will help increase a voter's willingness to return the completed registration packet. We know that the average person who receives and completes a voter registration packet won't remember to take the last step to return it to the local board. This is why when volunteers are trained to do field voter registration, the training instructs the volunteer to take the completed form from the eligible voter and return it to the local board for them.

Providing some ability for the voter to access a pre-paid envelope – ideally making sure it's available in the voter registration packet that's available online, as well as available to pick up at the local board – would be a step towards making voter registration more accessible overall.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report.