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The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee
Maryland General Assembly
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB0685 – Expanding Language Assistance in Maryland Elections

Dear Chairperson and Committee Members,

My name is Maureen Wambui, and I am a proud immigrant and resident of District 6, in Maryland. I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 685 (SB0685), which seeks to expand language assistance in elections to ensure all voters, regardless of their English proficiency, have equal access to the electoral process.

As an immigrant, I know firsthand the challenges that language barriers can create when trying to participate in civic life. Voting is one of the most fundamental rights of a democracy, and no one should feel excluded simply because they struggle with English. Many immigrants, including those who have lived in the U.S. for years, may still find it difficult to navigate ballots, voting instructions, and other election-related materials due to language limitations. This bill will address that gap by ensuring that necessary language assistance is provided where needed.

SB0685 will help create a more inclusive and representative democracy by requiring the State Board of Elections to assess and provide language support based on community needs. By offering translated materials and bilingual election judges, we can empower more eligible voters to participate confidently and make their voices heard. This initiative is not only about accessibility but also about fairness and equal opportunity.

I urge the committee to support SB0685 and take a crucial step toward breaking down barriers that prevent many immigrants from fully engaging in our democracy. Ensuring language access in elections strengthens our communities, encourages civic participation, and upholds the values of democracy that we all cherish.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Maureen Wambui