

February 24, 2025

Senate Bill SB323 Postage-Paid Voter Registration

Chair Brian J. Feldman, Vice Chair Cheryl C. Kagan, The Senate of Maryland Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Position: Support for Senate Bill 323

To the Honorable Members of the Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

My name is Aileen Klein and I live in Rockville, Maryland. I am writing you today about an issue that I thought had been fixed several years ago. I have an acquaintance who is in this country legally, but not yet a citizen. Her children, however, are citizens born in the U.S. She asked me several months ago how old you have to be to register to vote. I told her 16, then she told me her daughter turned 16 recently and wanted to register.

Years ago, I used to canvas to register voters, so I thought I would hold a gathering of my friend's daughter and her friends and show each how to register to vote. My thought was that they, in turn, would hold more get togethers with their other friends and get all of them registered. I did not know if the process had changed since then, so I called the Montgomery County Board of Elections in Gaithersburg. Sure enough, they had a class to instruct people on how to register others. I attended the class, along with six other people, and discovered that the registration form had not really changed at all. Neither had the fact that you needed to put a stamp on it to have it mailed.

I remember canvassing homes in Pennsylvania several elections ago and at one of the houses, I spoke with a young man who was home from college for the weekend. He told me he had his form and wanted to mail it, but when he was in his dorm, he had no idea where to get a stamp. This really hit me hard, because we try to make it as easy as possible for people to vote. I brought this up at the time to my legislators and thought the problem had been solved by having the forms stamped postage paid. Now I find out that this is only true for voting, not registering to vote.

The intention, I am sure, is to make voting as easy and as accessible as possible to every eligible voter. Rectifying this one small issue would be a step towards making this a reality.

Thank you so much for all you are doing to make Maryland and our country even better than it is today.

Sincerely,

Aileen Klein