

## Testimony Against SB0647

Honorable Senators

Please enter an unfavorable report against SB0647.

I am against:

- Requiring the State Board of Elections to provide a certain voter hotline for incarcerated individuals; and
- altering the circumstances under which an individual is not qualified to be a registered voter for the purpose of allowing individuals convicted of a felony and serving a court-ordered sentence of imprisonment for the conviction to register to vote.

Section 3-102, subsection (b)(1) states

An individual is not qualified to be a registered voter if the individual: has been convicted of a felony and is currently serving a court-ordered sentence of imprisonment for the conviction.

This bill would remove that restriction and all the requirements for the courts and government agencies to notify the SBE of those Maryland residents that have been sentenced to imprisonment for felonies.

Being convicted of felonies should have drastic consequences and in addition to losing one's freedom, one of these consequences should be losing the ability to vote while imprisoned.

It is bad enough that we have to pay the cost of imprisonment; we should not have to pay even more to institute this program.

It is my understanding that a hotline has the connotation of ensuring that someone is always available to answer a call when the line is operational. For example, if one calls the suicide prevention hotline, one does not expect to get a busy signal or to be put on hold. I would expect the prisoners would have difficulties waiting on hold or being able to leave a message and getting a call back.

How much would it cost the SBE to staff the hotline and what hours would it be operational?

However, these costs will be moot, if the restriction on voting by incarcerated felons is not removed.

Please vote against HB0647.

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