

## Unfavorable SB838- Election Law - Absentee Ballots - Signature Requirements and Verification

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From: National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

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To: Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to vote "Unfavorable" on SB838. If this bill is enacted, it will create additional barriers for voters with disabilities and will be an additional source of discrimination against these voters. It discriminates against persons with disabilities and the elderly. The signature of the voter on the absentee ballot envelope may not be the same as the signature on the voter registration card because for instance blind people cannot duplicate their signature exactly and the signature of an elderly person is not the same through no fault of their own. The aging process is just part of life and your writing changes as you age. People without disabilities do not write the same way and do not have a consistent signature either, so this bill will be difficult to enforce.

Voting is supposed to be barrier free but this bill has many barriers. Getting a witness for the signature will be a burden for persons with disabilities.

SB838 offers a solution to a problem that does not exist. If there is a problem of fraud, where are the statistics to demonstrate it? Making the application to request and submit an absentee ballot so difficult will discourage the applicant from voting. SB838 will be a deterrent to voters.\

Please vote no on SB838.