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TESTIMONY ON SB#/0838 - POSITION: UNFAVORABLE
Election Law - Absentee Ballots - Signature Requirements and Verification

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony opposing SB#/0838, Election Law - Absentee Ballots - Signature Requirements and Verification

This bill seems to be a response to the disproven accusations of cheating and fraud in the administration of elections in Maryland. The conservative Heritage Foundation found only 10 cases of voter fraud in Maryland between 2012-2023.¹ There were NONE in 2020 where there were 4,109,762 eligible voters.

This bill contemplates prohibiting a local board of elections from removing an absentee ballot from a return envelope or ballot/return envelope or counting the ballot unless the return envelope or ballot/return envelope is signed by the voter and, except under certain circumstances, a witness and the local board verify the voter's signature. What does this do to people such as my fifty-year-old son, a victim of a stroke, whose signature is now left handed and can never match his original right-handed signature for registration at age 16? Or mine, affected by my arthritis in my hand? What problem exists so that this extra burden of work should be placed onto our understaffed and overworked election volunteers and staff of the local elections board?

This bill appears to be driven by a need to attack a non-existent problem for political points among a set of voters and elected officials who continue to promote false narratives around elections and voting. It does nothing to secure our already secure and well-run elections. After millions and millions of votes cast in Maryland a total of 10 cases of fraud do not require this "remedy"!

I respectfully urge this committee to return an unfavorable report on SB#/0838.

¹ <https://electionfraud.heritage.org/search?state=md>