

# **DRM Testimony - Support - SB 93 Automatic delivery**

Uploaded by: Braden Stinar

Position: FAV

**SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**  
**February 5, 2025**  
**SB 93 – Election Law – Absentee Ballot Application – Sending to**  
**Eligible Voters Before Primary Elections**  
**Position: SUPPORT**

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is the Protection & Advocacy agency in Maryland, federally mandated to advance the civil rights of people with disabilities. DRM works to increase opportunities for Marylanders with disabilities to be part of their communities through voting by advocating for equal access to the ballot box.

DRM strongly supports SB 93, which requires each local board of elections to send absentee ballot applications to eligible voters in advance of each statewide primary election. The absentee, or mail-in voting method, increases voter participation by providing a more accessible and standardized way to cast a ballot. This bill will provide critical support for individuals with disabilities and expand their ability to exercise their fundamental voting rights.

Over the past few election cycles, the number of voters with disabilities has steadily increased as access to the ballot box continues to expand. According to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, 62% of individuals with disabilities turned out to vote in 2020, a notable increase from the 56% who voted in 2016.<sup>1</sup> Although data from the 2024 election is not yet available, the Rutgers Program for Disability Research projected that approximately 40.2 million individuals with disabilities were eligible to vote in the presidential election. This figure represents about one-sixth of the total electorate. Additionally, nearly one-third of voters either have a disability themselves or live with a household member who has a disability, underscoring the significant role that voters with disabilities play in shaping the electorate.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.eac.gov/news/2021/07/07/new-data-177-million-americans-disabilities-voted-2020-significant-increase-over>.

<sup>2</sup> [https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/Program\\_Disability\\_Research/Disability\\_Electorate\\_Projections\\_Report\\_Oct2024.pdf](https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/Program_Disability_Research/Disability_Electorate_Projections_Report_Oct2024.pdf).

These statistics highlight the growing importance of individuals with disabilities—and their families—in shaping our democracy. Strengthening voting access will continue to encourage greater participation among all Americans. Furthermore, given that mobility impairments are the most common type of disability among voters, it is crucial to expand support for voting options that do not solely require physical access to polling locations. Doing so will help ensure that voters with disabilities are not excluded from participating fully and equally in the electoral process.

By notifying registered voters of their ability to vote using the mail in ballot method, local boards of election play a critical role in increasing awareness of this voting option. For individuals who may have been unaware of mail-in voting, this notice serves as an introduction to the process. Additionally, it acts as a reminder for all registered voters that they have the option to vote by mail. This added awareness is particularly vital for individuals with disabilities, who sometimes require more time than others to gather the necessary information and complete the mail-in ballot registration process.

Before the passage of the Help America Vote Act in 2000, voter turnout among individuals with disabilities lagged nearly 17% behind that of their nondisabled peers. By 2020, this gap had narrowed to 11%,<sup>3</sup> demonstrating the progress made in enhancing accessibility and empowering individuals with disabilities to participate in the electoral process. However, more work remains to ensure that all eligible voters can fully exercise their rights. This bill not only removes barriers to the ballot box but also promotes greater awareness of voting rights and accessible voting options. By doing so, it strengthens our democracy and fosters a more inclusive and equitable electoral system.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report on House Bill 201. Please feel free to contact me with any questions at 410-929-6859 or [BradenS@DisabilityRightsMD.org](mailto:BradenS@DisabilityRightsMD.org).

Respectfully submitted,

Braden Stinar, Esq.  
Attorney  
Disability Rights Maryland

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<sup>3</sup> <https://adasoutheast.org/elections-have-gotten-more-accessible-for-disabled-voters-but-gaps-remain/>



# **SB 93 - Election Law – Absentee Ballot Application**

Uploaded by: Morgan Drayton

Position: FAV

**February 5, 2025**

**Testimony on SB 93**  
**Election Law – Absentee Ballot Application – Sending to Eligible Voters Before Primary**  
**Elections**  
**Education, Energy, and the Environment**

**Position:** Favorable

Common Cause Maryland supports SB 93, which would require that local Boards of Elections send a mail-in ballot request form to eligible voters who have not opted into the permanent mail-in ballot program at least 60 days before each primary election.

According to the State Board of Elections, about 18% of voters who voted in the 2024 general election chose to vote by mail and almost 765000 mail-in voting packets were sent to voters. These individuals requested or opted into the permanent mail list since ballots were not automatically mailed to voters as they were in 2020, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the primary method of voting continues to be casting a ballot in person, the number of individuals choosing to vote by mail has continued to increase election cycle after election cycle. Proactively sending request forms to voters played a large role in the increase of those choosing to continue voting through this method.

The mail-in voting program has boosted participation in the previous two elections cycles and is absolutely essential for those unable to vote in person. SB 93 would maintain the practice of mailing request forms which will remind voters that they can conveniently and securely participate in our elections from the comfort of their own homes.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.

# **SB93 Election Law - Absentee Ballot - Application**

Uploaded by: Nikki Tyree

Position: FWA



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**TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**SB 93 - Election Law - Absentee Ballot Application - Sending to Eligible Voters Before Primary Elections**

**POSITION: Favorable with Amendments**

**BY: Linda Kohn, President**

**Date: February 5, 2025**

The League of Women Voters, representing members in every district of Maryland, supports SB 93 and measures to involve every voter in Maryland in an easy and equitable voting process. LWVMD's position on Voting Rights and Election Administration calls for an election system that is representative, feasible to implement and increases voter participation.

In Maryland, when Rockville used vote-by-mail for the first time in its 2019 Mayoral election, turnout almost doubled from about 16% in 2015 to about 31% in 2019.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, in Maryland's 2020 Primary Election, using VBM for the first time in a statewide contest, voter turnout was about the same as in the 2016 primary election at just over 40%.<sup>2</sup> These statistics show that, at most, voting by mail can significantly increase voter participation or at least not hurt turnout.

The League knows that voting by mail has advantages. VBM can be helpful for senior citizens or voters living in rural or remote areas who may find it difficult to travel to vote. It can also help younger voters who may move out of state or out of district and do not have the luxury of returning home for an election.

The State Board of Elections has already put into place procedures and policies around vote by mail. This bill would add another safeguard to ensure that as many voters can vote as possible with whatever option works best for them. Many times, voters will not always know if they can vote in person, either during early voting or on the actual election day. Voters always have the choice of requesting to vote by mail, but SB 93

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<sup>1</sup> Rockville Board of Supervisors of Elections report on November 5, 2019 Election Report, April 6, 2020

<sup>2</sup> Department of Legislative Services, Office of Policy Analysis, "Covid-19 and Voting By Mail," Presentation to the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee and the House Committee Ways and Means, June 16, 2020.





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would take the guesswork out of going to the SBE website to request the ballot. It would also continue to educate Maryland voters that voting by mail is a safe option.

Moreover, in light of the recent election, there were many confused voters. They did not know if their ballots had been received or where exactly they were meant to vote. This led to many provisional ballots having to be used. If SB 93 is enacted, there is a possibility that it could help alleviate that burden on the voter as well as election judges on election day. In order to work effectively, SB 93 would have to be applied to both primary and general elections.

The League is very happy with this bill, but in light of our support for expanding voter participation, we would respectfully ask for one amendment to this bill: that it would apply **before the primary and general elections.**

LWVMD urges a favorable report with the above amendment for SB 93.

# **2025 SB0093 Testimony Against 2025-02-05.pdf**

Uploaded by: Alan Lang

Position: UNF

## Testimony Against SB0093

Honorable Senate

Please enter an unfavorable report against SB0093.

The Fiscal and Policy review last year estimated that sending an absentee ballot to every registered voter in Maryland (whether wanted or not), would cost at least \$1 million in 2026 and another \$1 million in 2028. Absentee ballots should be the exception and not the rule, and should only be issued by request.

Given the inaccurate status of each county's voter registration files, adopting this bill would further increase the chance for fraud. Other states have reported instances where multiple ballots are sent to one address, or sent to apartment buildings with no room numbers. These ballots are then collected and used to vote illegally. Without any signature verification, this type of voting via identity theft goes undetected.

Because of the cost plus the lack of identity and chain of custody controls, please enter an unfavorable report against HB0201.

Alan Lang  
45 Marys Mount Road  
Harwood, Maryland 20776  
Legislative District 30 B  
410-336-9745  
[Alanlang1@verizon.net](mailto:Alanlang1@verizon.net)

February 5, 2025

**Final-SB93-2025.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: John Michael Gudger

Position: INFO



# Maryland Association of Election Officials

## Representing the Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland

February 5, 2025

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee Members,

### **SB93 - Information**

The Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) is the professional membership organization representing local election officials and Election Boards across all 24 jurisdictions in Maryland. Our members are committed to ensuring the smooth and effective administration of elections and are deeply dedicated to making Maryland elections accessible, secure, and fair.

MAEO wishes to provide information on Election Law - Absentee Ballot Application - Sending to Eligible Voters Before Primary Elections SB93, which requires the local boards of election to send each eligible voter an absentee application at least 60 days prior to each statewide primary election. SB93 has the potential to place undue monetary and logistical burden on the local boards of elections.

Local Boards of Election understand the motive of SB93 is to ensure that mail-in ballot applications continue to be sent to any active registered voter who has not previously requested to permanently receive a mail-in ballot. In the past two election cycles, the obligation to mail applications to this population was placed on the State Board of Elections and the cost was split with local boards. With each subsequent mailing, we might expect fewer voters to avail themselves of this option so we must consider the potential ramifications of SB93 as written. This bill will require large scale mailings every two years as this bill indicates that mailings are indefinite. Extensive, repetitive mailings at the local board level will place an inordinate financial encumbrance on the local boards of election, particularly if each board is solely responsible for the cost. We recognize in the fiscal note that there is an assumption that costs will be shared by the state and local jurisdictions, but we do not see such language in the bill.

SB93 will require local boards of election to either usurp time during an election cycle that is dedicated to other office operations in order to mail out applications, or it will require them to finance the mailings through a vendor. Choosing to encumber the local boards of election with this financial and logistical plight may negatively impact regular operations without yielding the intended results.

Currently, voters have an opportunity to exercise the right to vote by mail by requesting to do so in writing or online through the State Board of Elections website. These options would continue to be available regardless of the passage of this particular bill.

MAEO supports ongoing goals of improving election administration while maximizing efficient and effective workloads for the local boards of elections. For these reasons, we respectfully thank you for your time and consideration of this information in your deliberations on Senate Bill 93.