



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE ASIAN AMERICAN
AND PACIFIC ISLANDER CAUCUS
MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

DELEGATE HARRY BHANDARI, PH.D
CHAIR

DELEGATE MARK S. CHANG
FIRST VICE CHAIR

DELEGATE LILY QI
SECOND VICE CHAIR

SENATOR CLARENCE K. LAM, M.D., M.P.H.
SECRETARY

DELEGATE CHAO WU, PH.D
TREASURER

DELEGATE DAVID MOON
CHAIR, LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY
COMMITTEE

DELEGATE KRISSELDA VALDERRAMA
CHAIR, OUTREACH COMMITTEE

DELEGATE SARAH WOLEK

February 25, 2025

**Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Distinguished Members of the
Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,**

**SB 685: Election Law - Local Boards of Elections - Language-Related
Assistance**

The AAPI Caucus strongly supports SB 685, which ensures equitable access to the electoral process for Maryland residents with limited English proficiency. Many members of the AAPI community face significant language barriers when engaging with the voting process. This bill will require local election boards to assess the needs of their communities and provide crucial language assistance, including translated voting materials, bilingual election judges, and interpreter hotlines. Guaranteeing that every eligible voter can fully understand and participate in elections strengthens our democracy. The ability to access voting information in one's primary language is essential to ensuring fair participation, especially in communities where English is not the dominant language spoken at home. By promoting inclusivity in voting, SB 685 helps ensure that all Marylanders, regardless of language proficiency, have a fair and equal opportunity to make their voices heard.

Sincerely,

Delegate Harry Bhandari, PhD

Chair, Maryland Asian American Pacific Islander Caucus