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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Local Board of Elections Transparency Act (HB 412)

Testimony of Delegate Marc Korman- Favorable

Thank you Madame Chair, Madame Vice Chair, and members of the Ways and Means Committee. I come before you today to discuss the Local Board of Elections Transparency Act (HB 412). This is an important next step in our continuing efforts to bring transparency and accessibility to our election process.

This bill serves to increase transparency among local boards of elections and boards of canvassers by expanding streaming and archival requirements. Local boards would be required to publish their agendas, written public testimonies, finalized documents, and all relevant materials on their websites 48 hours before every meeting. For all open meetings, local boards must livestream meetings; and then publish and maintain an archive of at least five years' worth of unedited footage. Board of canvassers must also livestream the canvass while maintaining an archive of at least five years' worth of unedited footage.

The bill has the potential to increase citizens' engagement with their local boards of elections and canvassers. Currently, 10 counties provide live streams of their board of elections meetings. Howard County, for example, provides its constituents with live streams and the accompanying meeting agenda and minutes on the county website. The streaming of meetings was typical during the height of COVID, when many currently streaming local boards adopted the practice.

The expansions will align local requirements with state standards. The State Board of Elections has live streamed and maintained the records of its meeting livestreams, agendas, minutes, and related materials for over five years as a result of legislation the General Assembly passed.<sup>1</sup> This legislation would require all local boards to follow this action that already occurs across the state and at the state level.

The Local Board of Elections Transparency Act will increase the accessibility of local boards of elections and provide a means for citizens to better remain informed about their local elections.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://elections.maryland.gov/about/board.html>