



Maryland Libertarian Party

Travis Lerol, Treasurer

410 245-1902

treasurer@lpmaryland.org

HB 0642:

**Election Law - Registered Voter List and Petitions
(Ballot Petition Modernization Act)**

Position: Favorable

The ability of every citizen to engage in choice is the very foundation of our system of government, and HB 0642 is a step to strengthen that freedom. It provides for a viable means of participation even in the case of emergencies. All of us remember the many difficulties of covid, and the lawsuit that was filed, and won, by Libertarians and Greens in order to preserve this vital mechanism.

Now that we have experienced this firsthand, it is time to update legislation to protect this freedom on an enduring basis. Collecting signatures electronically not only raises accuracy rate, reducing labor for the BoE, it is a means of participation that the youngest voters readily understand. Getting these young voters to understand the political system and to participate in it is essential to the long term health of our state, and electronic signatures permit them to engage in it via the venues they already use.

Permitting voters to submit corrections is also essential to ensure the voter's will is properly expressed. Errors and omissions are frequent in signature gathering efforts. The Board of Election currently advises that as many as 30% of signatures are commonly rejected in such efforts. This is much higher than desirable, and my experience indicates that the Board's estimate is accurate. We should strive to reduce this and voters should have reasonable opportunities to correct errors, which HB 0642 provides.

Of course, there are a few other minor changes which clarify which parts are optional, as well as other useful bits that contribute to transparency. These you already understand, and we ask you to support this bill through committee without delay.

In Liberty,

Travis Lerol

Treasurer, Libertarian Party of Maryland