



TESTIMONY TO HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HB 412 Elections - Local Boards of Elections and Boards of Canvassers - Open Meeting Requirements (Local Boards of Elections Transparency Act)

Position: Support

By: LINDA KOHN, President

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The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation at all levels of government. The League further believes that governmental bodies must protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible. This bill also requires each local board to provide live video streaming of each open meeting and to maintain a complete and unedited archived video which is state of the art practice for transparency of public bodies.

Over the years, the League of Women Voters has been proud to support numerous pieces of legislation that advanced transparency in many of our state agencies by codifying measure such as those named above. During the special circumstances of the Covid 19 pandemic, local Boards of Elections live-streamed their canvasses and meetings to assure the public that they are following procedures designed to result in fair and accurate elections. This bill would require them to continue this practice.

It is essential that the public have faith in our election processes. Allowing public scrutiny of the decision-making and canvassing procedures of Local Boards of Election will assure voters that Maryland's election officials are acting in their best interest and help to undermine the conspiracy theories and misinformation about elections that unfortunately is all too common today.

We urge a favorable report on HB 412.

