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TESTIMONY ON HB#1110 – FAVORABLE

Election Law - Individuals Released from State Correctional Facilities - Automatic Restoration of Voter Registration

TO: Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins and members of the Ways & Means Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#1110, Election Law - Individuals Released from State Correctional Facilities - Automatic Restoration of Voter Registration

Maryland law is specific on how formerly incarcerated persons voting rights are upheld. ¹

You can vote even if you were convicted of a felony, if:

- The felony convictions are not for the crime of buying or selling votes; and
- You have completed your imprisonment.

You can vote while on probation, unless you are convicted of buying or selling votes.

However, many formerly incarcerated people are not made aware of the voting rights restoration nor any positive actions taken to ensure they can and will take action to get that right restored.

This bill makes it clear that the State of Maryland will take positive actions to uphold the right to vote. This will occur by requiring the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to transmit a list that includes the name and new residential address of individuals released from incarceration at a State correctional facility to the State Board of Elections on a weekly basis. It will then require the State Board to automatically restore the voter registration of certain individuals released from State correctional facilities who were registered to vote in the State before being incarcerated.

The person automatically re-registered will receive notification from the State Board of Elections since the registration information already existed and was updated by the DPSCS with the State Board of Elections. ²

¹ <https://www.peoples-law.org/voting-after-criminal-conviction>

² https://elections.maryland.gov/voter_registration/index.html

If your application is complete, you are considered a registered voter. If you do not receive a Voter Notification Card three weeks after you submit an application, you should [contact your local board of elections](#). You can also verify whether you are registered to vote by visiting our [Voter Lookup website](#).

Registration is permanent as long as you continue to live in Maryland and keep your name and address current. You do not have to re-register when you move within the State.

Maryland can ensure that every legal voter is registered and has the opportunity to know their voter status to exercise the franchise.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report and pass HB1110.