

## Testimony Against HB0983

Honorable Delegates

Please vote against HB0983.

I am against

- requiring the State Board of Elections to determine whether there is a significant and substantial need for language-related assistance in certain languages by a local board of elections during an election based on certain criteria;
- requiring local boards to provide certain language-related assistance and materials in voting and elections to certain voters in certain languages; and
- requiring local boards to make reasonable efforts to recruit election judges who are fluent in certain languages.

Federal law already has standards regarding language-related assistance. Under Section 203 of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, States and political subdivisions that meet specified thresholds of numbers of citizens of voting age who are members of a specified single language minority and are limited-English proficient must provide any registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials or information relating to the electoral process, including ballots, in the language of the applicable minority group as well as in the English language. As long as we are compliant with Federal law, we do not need the extra burdens proposed by this bill.

This bill could be costly to the State and local boards as they may need to print instructions, signage and ballots in one or more foreign languages as well as try to hire foreign speaking judges when finding sufficient numbers of English speaking judges is often difficult. There is no fiscal review providing an estimate for the cost of these proposed requirements.

Moreover, this bill sets up a process for an individual or an ethnic group organization, such as CAIR, to sue the boards if it believes sufficient foreign language materials are not provided. The State Board could also sue the local board if it refuses to supply foreign language materials, and the local board may sue the state board to provide only English language materials.

The job of the local boards to hold the elections and obtain sufficient volunteers who speak English to be workers is daunting enough. Please do not add any more administrative burden to the boards and create a process that could potentially involve suits against these boards. Please vote against bill HB0983 despite its good intentions.

Alan Lang  
45 Marys Mount Road  
Harwood, MD 20776  
Legislative District 30B  
410-336-9745  
[Alanlang1@verizon.net](mailto:Alanlang1@verizon.net)  
February 18, 2025