



Maryland Association of Election Officials

Representing the Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland

January 21, 2025

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
Maryland House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

HB41 - Support

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) is the professional membership organization representing local election officials and Election Boards across all 24 jurisdictions in the state. Our members are dedicated to ensuring the smooth and effective administration of elections, and we are deeply committed to making Maryland elections accessible, secure, and fair.

MAEO supports House Bill 41, which makes important improvements to the petition process for the formation of new political parties. These changes will increase efficiency and clarity for both election officials and those seeking to form new parties, while reducing administrative burdens on local boards of elections.

Under current law, local boards may face significant challenges managing the resubmission of petition signatures after an initial petition has already been rejected. The processing of the same, now outdated, signatures in subsequent petitions could create unnecessary work for election officials, consume valuable resources and may not reflect the current wishes of those who signed in a past petition. By preventing the resubmission of all signatures from a previously rejected petition, this bill will ensure that only fresh, valid signatures are considered, improving the integrity and efficiency of the petition review process.

MAEO recognizes that managing petition submissions is a time-intensive process that must be handled accurately and fairly. House Bill 41 provides a clear, streamlined approach that reduces confusion for petitioners and prevents election officials processing out-of-date petition signatures. By moving the cutoff date from the first Monday in August to the first Monday in July during gubernatorial and presidential election years, the bill ensures that local election officials are less likely to be overwhelmed with last-minute petition filings during the busiest times of the election cycle.

Ultimately, this legislation strikes a balance between maintaining open access to the political process and ensuring that election officials can focus their efforts on verifying new and valid submissions. MAEO believes that these improvements will strengthen Maryland's election processes and reduce administrative strain on local boards of elections.

We respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 41.