



Maryland State Board of Elections

HB 75 – Chair, Ways and Means Committee (By Request - Departmental - State Board of Elections)

Election Law – Special Elections

Purpose:

1. Changes the time period for conducting a local special election using vote by mail
2. Allows for the State Administrator to change or alter deadlines to meet the special election date
3. Provides enabling legislation for a County Council to hold one election instead of a primary and general
4. Clarifies that specimen ballots are not required to be mailed for a vote by mail election
5. Requires that ballots are mailed no later than 30 days before the special election date
6. Clarifies that drop boxes are permitted

Comments:

The proposed legislation brings the conduct of a local special election in line with State laws and administrative necessities for conducting a vote by mail election. Local special elections, especially a vote-by-mail, no longer are just a county-specific operation but involve oversight and administration by the State Board of Elections. It requires 90 days to conduct a local election and still meet the requirements of Federal and State deadlines to send out ballots in advance. Furthermore, the bill allows domestic voters more time for ballot delivery. This benefits the voter who misplaces, spoils, or destroys the ballot, and requests a new one.

The legislation enables a county the option to eliminate a special primary election in certain cases. In doing so, the bill has potential cost savings for the county, allows for the vacancy to be filled faster, and could significantly reduce the workload for local election officials. This bill allows for flexibility for each jurisdiction to fill a vacancy in a manner that best represents the needs of its citizens.

Additionally, the bill authorizes the State Administrator oversight authority ensuring that special elections continue to be conducted in a manner consistent with state laws and regulations, even when there are conflicts with county charters or local laws. This provision eliminates any potential conflicts while maintaining the integrity of Maryland's election processes.

Thank you and we look forward to your favorable passage of this bill.

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**JARED DeMARINIS, STATE ADMINISTRATOR
STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

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