



## Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

House Ways and Means Committee

HB 67: Election Law – Absentee Ballots – Signature Requirements and Verification

January 28, 2025

Position: Oppose

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) is an independent, public policy organization that creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. Our vision is that people with and without disabilities in Maryland live, learn, work, and play together.

WHAT does this legislation do?

- HB 67 requires **a local board of elections to verify an individual's signature** on the envelope for a mail-in absentee ballot before counting the ballot. It also requires a witness sign the envelope.
- The signature requirements are waived for active duty service members or their spouses if they are living overseas.

WHY is this a problem?

- It makes voting more difficult and cumbersome for everyone. It adds more unnecessary steps to the process.
- It creates barriers for people with disabilities because:
  - People with disabilities are more likely to vote by absentee ballot due to existing voting location accessibility issues.
  - People with disabilities are more likely not to be able to provide a written signature.
- It costs local governments money. In 2024, the fiscal note for bill that estimated local governments would have to spend over \$600,000 annually to cover related expenses.<sup>1</sup>

Voters with developmental disabilities want and need access to participate effectively in the electoral process. HB 67 is a step in the wrong direction. For that reason, the DD Council opposes HB 67.

Contact: Dr. Stephanie Dolamore, Deputy Director, [SDolamore@md-council.org](mailto:SDolamore@md-council.org)

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<sup>1</sup> [https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2024RS/fnotes/bil\\_0002/hb0202.pdf](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2024RS/fnotes/bil_0002/hb0202.pdf)