

Testimony Against HB0624

Honorable Delegates

Please enter an unfavorable report against HB0624.

I do not support requiring

- that a statewide voter registration application include a return envelope or envelope template with prepaid postage that an applicant may use to **return the application to the State Board of Elections**; and
- return envelopes or envelope templates to be **preprinted with the address of the State Board** for purposes of returning the statewide voter registration application.

This bill wants to change the process so that all new registration requests will be sent only to the State Board of Elections (SBE). However the current process per the State Voter Registration website states

Forms can be **MAILED** to the State Board of Elections ([see address](#)) **OR** to your [county's Board of Elections](#).

https://elections.maryland.gov/voter_registration/application.html

The current process already has an envelope designed to be sent to one's local Board of Elections (LBE). The envelope has the following pre-printed on the envelope ("County Board of Elections"). However, it does not have prepaid postage and the location of the LBE is not preprinted (So the form can be sent to any of the 24 local LBEs).

To get the downloadable form and a list of the addresses for all 24 LBEs, use the url below
https://elections.maryland.gov/voter_registration/documents/English_Internet_VRA.pdf

If one does not want to download the blank form, one can use the online process to fill in the form via online keying. If it is a new registration, then one would print it, sign it, and then mail it to one's LBE. If one is already registered, but needs to make a change such as an address or party affiliation, one can use the online process and avoid mailing the form.

To fill out the form online, use the next 2 urls

<https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/OnlineVoterRegistration/InstructionsStep1>
<https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/OnlineVoterRegistration/InstructionsStep2>

Those without online access can go to their LBE and acquire a form, take it home, prepare it, sign it and then mail it in or prepare it there, sign it and submit it to the LBE staff.

At the time I prepared my testimony, there was not a fiscal analysis available. I would imagine there would be programming costs to change the current website, and the online process plus redo the existing envelope to add the complete address of the SBE and to add the prepaid postage.

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My bigger concern is that all the new registrations and the registration changes not done online will now be required to be sent to the SBE instead of the LBE address of the registrant. The SBE does not have the staffing to process these requests, which should have been sent to the LBE.

How much will it cost the SBE to forward these registration requests to the LBE?

Has an analysis been done to estimate how many people have not registered to vote because they could not afford a stamp or could not address an envelope? Are there enough potential users to warrant the cost of this new process when the State is facing a \$3 billion dollar deficit?

Please enter an unfavorable report against HB0624.

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