

## **HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE**

**February 24, 2025**

### **HB 1110 – Election Law – Individuals Released from State Correctional Facilities – Automatic Restoration of Voter Registration Position: SUPPORT**

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is the Protection & Advocacy agency in Maryland, federally mandated to advance the civil rights of people with disabilities. DRM works to increase opportunities for Marylanders with disabilities to be part of their communities through voting by advocating for equal and equitable access to the ballot box. DRM supports HB 1110, which requires the State Board of Elections (SBE) to restore the voting rights of individuals released from incarceration who were previously registered to vote in the State prior to incarceration.

HB 1110 creates a requirement for the Department of Public Safety to notify the State Board of Elections on a weekly basis with the names and addresses of individuals released from incarceration. SBE will then be tasked with automatically restoring the individual's voter registration status at the individual's new address and notifying them by mail of their active voter status.

DRM strongly supports this bill and acknowledges how significant this legislation will be for formerly incarcerated Marylanders with disabilities who often navigate barriers reintegrating back into life after incarceration. It is imperative to protect the fundamental voting rights of these individuals by removing potential obstacles that may arise during the voting registration process.

In Maryland, approximately 16,000 people are unable to vote due to currently serving criminal convictions.<sup>1</sup> This disenfranchisement disproportionately affects underrepresented groups, including people with disabilities. Nationally, approximately 38% of incarcerated individuals have at least one disability, highlighting the significant impact of voter disenfranchisement on this population.<sup>2</sup> HB 1110 marks a significant step forward by requiring the Department of Public Safety and State Board of Elections to collaborate in restoring tvoting rights for individuals upon release, significantly reducing uncertainty for those incarcerated for felony convictions—many of whom have disabilities—about the registration and restoration process.

For these reasons, DRM requests a favorable report on House Bill 1110. Please do not hesitate to contact me at BradenS@DisabilityRightsMD.org or by phone at 443-692-2485.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attorney  
Disability Rights Maryland

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sentencingproject.org/fact-sheet/why-we-must-restore-voting-rights-to-over-16000-marylanders/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/disabilities-reported-prisoners-survey-prison-inmates-2016>