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Richard Keith Kaplowitz
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TESTIMONY ON HB#/0253- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Election Law - Pretrial Detainees - Absentee Ballots

TO: Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0253, **Election Law - Pretrial Detainees - Absentee Ballots**

The right to vote is one of the most precious rights that citizens have; the opportunity to evaluate candidates and issues and give their opinion, via that vote, to who they wish to have as their representative in a government. Persons who have not been convicted of a crime or serving a sentence for a crime should still have that right to vote protected and encouraged.

This bill will require the State Board of Elections or the local boards of elections to automatically send an absentee ballot to each registered voter in pretrial detention in a correctional facility without the voter having to submit an absentee ballot application. A person in custody, while dealing with the situation that placed them in pretrial detention, may not remember or know how to record their vote. The provision of the absentee ballot to persons in this state of affairs ensures that their right to vote is respected and their vote recorded.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0253.