

January 24, 2025

Testimony on HB 285

Election Law – Voter Registration List – Absentee Voters (Absentee Ballot Transparency Act of 2025)

Ways & Means

Position: Unfavorable

Common Cause Maryland is opposed to HB 285, which would require the State Board of Elections to provide a candidate with a list of registered voters - including each voter's name, email address, and telephone number - who have requested an absentee ballot for an upcoming election upon request.

The bill as written raises serious privacy concerns for voters who submit their email addresses and phone numbers for the sole purpose of keeping in contact with the State Board of Elections. At the very least, there should be an option for an individual to opt-out of having their personal information shared with candidates.

This legislation would introduce the potential for leaks, misuse, or abuse of voters' personal information. By providing candidates with this information, we risk subjecting those groups who are most likely to vote by mail – i.e. the elderly, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups – to the possibility of intimidation, dis- or mis-information, or other threats to the voter's ability to exercise their right to vote.

For these reasons, we respectfully request an unfavorable report on HB 285.