TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HB 1113 Election Law – Enhance Automatic Voter Registration System

POSITION – Support

BY: Linda T. Kohn, President

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The League of Women Voters of Maryland believes that the election process should be inclusive, feasible, and encourage as many voters as possible to participate.

HB 1113 would upgrade Maryland's automatic voter registration system to an enhanced system that automatically opts in voters while they perform everyday tasks like renewing or receiving their driver's license and working with Maryland Health Connection.

When reviewing Maryland voter turnout rates, especially during the primary elections, it becomes evident that the state is experiencing a voter participation crisis. The passage of HB 1113 would allow more people to register and eventually become voting Marylanders. The enhanced automatic voter registration would ensure a streamlined process for those who register and give the State Board of Elections a way to engage with them through the affiliation and education process. It would also prevent people who are not eligible to vote from making the critical error of accidentally registering.

Too often, we are informed that people decline to register because they are already feeling frazzled by the task they are trying to complete. They see registering to vote as another hassle and often decline without realizing what that means for them as Maryland voters. Enhanced AVR would take away the stress of having to think about another thing while not leaving them out of the democratic process.

Maryland would join ten other states that have already adopted this model and seen positive outcomes. For example, more up-to-date voter rolls would lessen the workload of the SBE administration when auditing the rolls. This would also increase efficiency and lower costs for the Maryland Vehicle Administration, SBE, and local Boards.

LWVMD urges a favorable report on HB 1113.