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TESTIMONY ON HB#/1113 – FAVORABLE

Election Law - Enhanced Automatic Voter Registration System

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

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#1113, Election Law - Enhanced Automatic Voter Registration System

Federal law requires the MVA to provide its customers the opportunity to apply to register to vote, or update voting information, during a driver's license or photo identification (ID) card transaction.¹

Prior to your driver's license or identification card transaction you will be given an "[Applying to Register to Vote at MVA](#)" flyer at the information counter. This flyer will instruct you on what to expect during the motor voter transaction. MVA customers will then answer the voter application questions through a computerized touch screen and their driver's licenses or identification card signatures will be used to certify the application for voter registration. This information is then transmitted electronically to the State Board of Elections on a nightly basis. This process is paperless.

However, not every minor under 18 years of age even gets a driver's license before 18 so we are failing to register eligible voters ages 16-18. And while they cannot vote in a general election until reaching age 18 as registered voters, they have some rights from that registration. A seventeen-year-old can vote in a primary election if they are turning 18 on or before the general election date. And, more importantly, they can become Election Workers staffing the polls to facilitate conducting the election.

We know that we are missing registration applications because we miss everyone who has not come to the DMV to utilize Motor Voter.²

¹ <https://mva.maryland.gov/Pages/motor-voter.aspx>

² https://aaafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/19-0500_AAAFTS_Teen-Driver-Safety-Week-Brief_r1.pdf

The AAA Foundation in 2019 surveyed a nationally-representative sample of 1,402 young adults ages 18–24 to estimate the proportion of young adults nationwide who possess a driver’s license, the ages at which they first obtained their license, and factors associated with the timing of licensure. Results show that an estimated 41% of this cohort received their first driver’s license at or before age 16, 19% at age 17, and 28% at age 18 or older. An additional 4% had a learner’s permit, and 8% had neither a license nor a permit.

This means that 40% of eligible to register minors are not using Motor Voter at the DMV.

The intent of the bill is to change the voter registration process at the DMV from an election by the licensee to register to automatically registering them as a voter as part of the licensing process. It will also permit the State Board of Elections to do automatic registration when citizens interact with other state agencies and boards.

This goal will be accomplished by requiring the Motor Vehicle Administration to implement an enhanced automatic voter registration system on or before July 1, 2026. It works through establishing requirements regarding the transmission of enhanced automatic voter registration information by the Administration, the processing of the voter registration information by the State Board of Elections, and the sending of notices by the State Board. Finally, it will expand voter registration locations by authorizing the State Board to implement certain enhanced automatic voter registration at certain agencies with their consent.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report and pass HB1113.