

## Unfavorable HB 067: Election Law – Absentee Ballots – Signature Requirements and Verification

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From: National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

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To: Ways and Means Committee

The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the House Ways and Means Committee to vote unfavorable on HB0067. If this bill is enacted, it will create additional barriers for voters with disabilities and will be an additional source of discrimination against these voters. The bill would require signatures on envelopes, which will have the effect of additional discrimination against those with certain disabilities, including blindness, print disabilities, and manual dexterity limitations.

The signature of the voter on the absentee ballot envelope may not be the same as the signature on the voter registration card because blind people cannot duplicate their signature exactly. In addition, voters who are blind, low vision, and have print disabilities may need to obtain assistance signing the envelope, which creates one more touch-point when others have access to their ballots and voting decisions that are supposed to be private and independent. Those with print disabilities including blindness already face significant barriers to voting absentee privately and independently, and an additional signature requirement will be overly burdensome, duplicative, redundant, unnecessary, and discriminatory.

Voting is supposed to be barrier free but this bill has many barriers. Getting a witness for the signature will be a burden for persons with disabilities.

HB0067 offers a solution to a problem that does not exist. If there is a problem of fraud, where are the statistics to demonstrate it? Making the application to request an absentee ballot so difficult will discourage the applicant from voting. HB0067 will be a deterrent to voters.

Please vote no on HB0067

For questions or more information, please feel free to contact me at [President@nfbmd.org](mailto:President@nfbmd.org) or at 443-426-4110.

