



Wes Moore | Governor
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor
Katie Savage | Secretary

TO: House Ways and Means Committee
FROM: Department of Information Technology
RE: Senate Bill 615 - Election Law - Petitions and Ballot Questions - Contents, Plain Language Requirement, and Procedures
DATE: March 25, 2025
POSITION: Support

The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbeary
House Ways and Means Committee
130 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary,

The Department of Information Technology (DoIT) is pleased to submit this letter in support of Senate Bill 615. This bill introduces critical improvements to the petition and ballot question process, ensuring clarity, accessibility, and transparency in election procedures across the state of Maryland.

SB 615 establishes requirements for ballot questions and petitions to be written in plain language, eliminating legal jargon and complex sentence structures that may obscure the intent of ballot measures. As an agency committed to leveraging technology to enhance government accessibility, we recognize the necessity of clear, voter-friendly language in all election materials. The use of plain language aligns with best practices in digital government communications and enhances voter comprehension, ultimately leading to more informed electoral participation.

We recommend referencing the new Maryland Plain Language Standards published on digital.maryland.gov, as federal resources have become unpredictable. These state-specific standards provide clear guidance for agencies to ensure their communications are accessible and easily understood by the public.

The bill's provision requiring the online posting of complete ballot text for at least 90 days before a general election strengthens public access to vital election materials. Ensuring that voters have adequate time and opportunity to review ballot questions aligns with the state's broader commitment to transparency and public trust in government.



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The Department of Information Technology fully supports SB 615's objectives and urges the committee to advance this legislation. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to improving Maryland's electoral processes. We appreciate your consideration and look forward to working collaboratively to implement these crucial reforms.

Best,

Melissa Leaman
Acting Secretary
Department of Information Technology