

February 2026

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is The Honorable Dr Cashenna A Cross. I serve as Councilwoman At Large for the City of Glenarden Maryland, a United States Air Force veteran, and a municipal leader committed to transparent and accountable governance. I submit this testimony regarding House Bill 955 concerning elections within condominiums and homeowners associations.

Determination: Favorable with Amendments

Homeowners associations and condominium boards exercise authority that directly impacts residents' daily lives, financial stability, and housing security. Unlike municipalities, which operate under public transparency laws, ethics standards, and voter accountability, associations often function with limited oversight. This creates a vulnerability that local governments cannot directly control but must ultimately help communities navigate when disputes arise.

For many Maryland residents, an association board represents the most immediate form of governance they encounter. When election procedures lack independent verification, confidence erodes and conflicts escalate, frequently spilling into municipal offices that have no statutory authority to intervene. As a local elected official, I have witnessed firsthand how unclear or disputed association elections create community instability and place unnecessary strain on municipal resources.

House Bill 955 attempts to reduce administrative burden by limiting the requirement for independent election administration to circumstances where the number of candidates exceeds the number of available seats. While efficiency is a reasonable goal, accountability must remain the guiding principle. Even uncontested elections can generate disputes when residents believe processes were not impartial or transparent.

Amendments Recommended

First, preserve the ability for members to request an independent election administrator when supported by a defined percentage of association members, regardless of the number of candidates.

Second, require advance written disclosure to all members when an election will not be conducted by an independent party, including a clear explanation of safeguards preventing conflicts of interest.

Third, establish minimum record retention and documentation requirements for ballots and certification procedures to ensure accountability if results are challenged.

These amendments maintain efficiency while reinforcing trust. Strong governance systems prevent disputes before they occur rather than attempting to resolve them afterward.

Municipal governments are frequently asked to help resolve association conflicts without having the legal authority to correct them. Strengthening accountability at the association level protects residents, reduces community division, and supports healthier neighborhoods across Maryland.

With these amendments, House Bill 955 can advance administrative efficiency while ensuring the transparency and accountability Maryland residents deserve.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued service to the people of this State.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honorable Dr Cashenna A Cross Councilwoman At Large City of Glenarden  
Maryland United States Air Force Veteran Moving the Mission Forward