

SB 89 Election Law - Incarcerated Individuals - Voter Hotline and Voting Eligibility

Position - Favorable

February 9, 2026

To the Honorable Chair and Members of the Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee

My name is Lesley Frost and I am the Chair of National Council of Jewish Women, Maryland State Policy Advocacy Committee (NCJW MD SPA) and I am writing on behalf of our 600 advocates across the state in support of SB 89 Election Law - Incarcerated Individuals - Voter Hotline and Voting Eligibility.

SB 89, part of the Voting Rights for All Act, expands voting access by establishing a voter hotline for incarcerated individuals and allowing people with felony convictions who are currently serving to vote. In Maryland, you lose your right to vote while you serve time in a state or federal correctional facility for a felony conviction. According to the Sentencing Project this means that 16,000 Marylanders lose their political voice, are banned from voting, while serving a prison or jail term for a felony conviction.

Of those who complete their sentences and become eligible to vote again many are unsure of their rights. They might know their conviction affected voting rights, but not the details: can they vote even if on probation? Do they need to take any additional steps to restore their voting rights? These uncertainties would vanish if someone returning from prison never lost their voting rights in the first place.

SB 89 comprises a series of transformative measures designed to eradicate disenfranchisement and empower marginalized communities, and is a long-overdue step towards fulfilling the promise of our democracy, where every American has a voice and a stake in shaping our nation's future.

SB89 also exemplifies NCJW's Resolution 1V.11 "Election laws, policies, and practices that ensure - without domestic or foreign interference - safe, easy and equitable access to the ballot and eliminate obstacles to the electoral process so that every vote counts and can be verified."

We urge you to support this essential legislation and ensure that all Americans can participate fully in our democratic processes.

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