



Maryland Association of Election Officials

Representing the Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland

February 25, 2026

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

SB670 - Support

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) is the professional membership organization representing local election officials and Election Boards across all 24 jurisdictions in the state. Our members are dedicated to ensuring the smooth and effective administration of elections, and we are deeply committed to making Maryland elections accessible, secure, and fair.

The Maryland Association of Election Officials supports Senate Bill 670. Currently, Maryland law grants specific authorities, such as keeping the peace, ordering arrests for interference, and managing challengers and watchers, primarily to election judges. However, in practice, local board of elections (LBEs) staff and directors are often the "experts in the room" who are dispatched to voting locations to resolve complex disputes and unmanageable situations.

SB 670 provides these professionally trained, non-partisan administrators with the same legal standing as election judges to:

- **Maintain Order:** Keep the peace and, if necessary, order the arrest of individuals who breach the peace or interfere with the election process.
- **Manage Observers:** Protect the rights of accredited challengers and watchers while also having the authority to deny admission or eject individuals who violate voting location regulations.
- **Ensure Timely Openings:** Require observers to leave or restrict admission if their presence prevents the voting location from opening on time.

Local board employees are career administrators mandated by law to prioritize the public interest over partisan concerns. By granting these officials the authority to act independently of an election judge, the bill streamlines polling place operations, particularly when a chief judge is absent or reluctant to make a difficult enforcement decision due to fear of harassment or litigation.

For these reasons, the Maryland Association of Election Officials respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 670.