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POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

BILL: SB0089 [Voting Rights For All Act]

FROM: Maryland Office of the Public Defender

POSITION: Favorable

DATE: 2/9/26

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender respectfully requests that the Committee issue a favorable report on Senate Bill #0089.

This bill is an important measure that ensures voting rights are meaningful, accessible, and fairly administered for all eligible individuals. A toll-free voter hotline for incarcerated individuals would provide a practical, secure way for people in custody to obtain accurate voting information, request necessary materials, and report violations of their rights. Access to reliable information is essential to the integrity of any election system, and incarceration should not mean isolation from civic processes.

Equally important, the bill modernizes voter eligibility laws by allowing individuals convicted of a felony and serving a court-ordered sentence of imprisonment to register to vote.

Disenfranchisement during incarceration disproportionately impacts marginalized communities and weakens representative government.

This bill recognizes voter participation as a tool for civic engagement that supports successful reentry and reduces recidivism.

For these reasons, the Maryland Office of the Public Defender urges this Committee to issue a favorable report on SB #0089

Submitted by: Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Government Relations Division.

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