



# 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

### **SB443 - 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.

MAEO supports Senate Bill 443, which would alter the qualifications for local board counsel by allowing an individual to be a registered voter of the State, rather than being restricted to the specific jurisdiction of the local board of elections (LBE).

Currently, the requirement for counsel to be a registered voter of the specific jurisdiction they serve can create significant hurdles for recruitment. Rural jurisdictions, in particular, often struggle to fill vital specialized positions because their smaller populations may not include residents with the niche legal expertise required for election law. Additionally, much of the day-to-day advisory work for Board Counsel is conducted via remote consultation, with in-person attendance primarily essential only during some monthly board meetings and during canvasses.

This change ensures that a jurisdiction's geographic boundaries do not prevent it from accessing the same high-level legal talent available to larger metropolitan areas. By broadening this residency requirement to the State level, LBEs gain the flexibility to recruit and retain the best possible legal advice to navigate increasingly complex election statutes.

Furthermore, as an emergency measure, this bill allows the boards **currently** facing vacancies or transitions to immediately benefit from an expanded pool of qualified candidates. This helps ensure that local boards will have the necessary legal support in place ahead of the 2026 primary elections.

MAEO is committed to ensuring fair, efficient, and accessible elections. We believe this administrative adjustment strengthens the stability of local board operations.

We respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 443.