



NATASHA DARTIGUE
PUBLIC DEFENDER
KEITH LOTRIDGE
DEPUTY PUBLIC DEFENDER
HANNIBAL KEMERER
CHIEF OF STAFF
ELIZABETH HILLIARD
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

**BILL: SB0089 -Election Law- Incarcerated Individuals - Voter Hotline and Voting Eligibility
(Voting Rights for All Act)**

FROM: Maryland Office of the Public Defender

POSITION: Favorable

DATE: February 11, 2026

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender respectfully requests that the Committee issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 89.

This bill strengthens democracy by ensuring that voting rights are meaningful, accessible, and fairly administered. 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 is a necessary step toward a more just, inclusive, and representative electoral system.

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

**Submitted by: Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Government Relations Division.
Authored by: Shannice Anderson, Community Engagement Coordinator PH: 667- 406-2362**