TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE:	Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment	**DATE:**	February 25, 2026
POSITION:	Favorable with Amendments	**BILL:**	SB 848

The Maryland Municipal League supports the goal of SB 848 to increase transparency and public access to municipal election information. Providing voters with clear, centralized information through the State Board of Elections website can improve participation and consistency across jurisdictions. Municipalities value transparency and are committed to providing timely and accurate election information to their residents. That said, several implementation provisions in the bill would benefit from adjustment to better reflect how municipal election cycles operate, particularly in small towns with limited staff capacity.

First, the bill requires municipalities to submit candidate qualifications for each office at least six months prior to the candidate filing deadline. For many municipalities, particularly smaller jurisdictions with part-time staff, election preparation does not begin that far in advance. A six-month lead time may create administrative challenges without meaningfully improving transparency. Reducing this requirement to three months prior to the filing deadline would better align with local election calendars while still providing ample time for public notice and State publication.

Second, the bill requires municipalities to submit a list of qualified candidates and voting information within one week after the filing deadline. In practice, that one-week turnaround may be too tight, particularly in jurisdictions where candidate verification, ballot certification, and notice preparation occur within the same window. Extending this timeline to ten business days would provide municipalities sufficient time to ensure accuracy while still delivering timely information to the State Board for publication.

Finally, the bill is unclear as to how these requirements apply to special elections. Special elections often occur under compressed timelines and unique circumstances. Clarifying whether and how the submission requirements apply in those situations would help avoid confusion and unintended compliance issues.

With these adjustments to ensure workable timelines and clarity, municipalities can effectively partner with the State to enhance election transparency while maintaining practical and administratively feasible processes. The League respectfully requests favorable consideration with these amendments.

For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:
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Maryland's 157 municipalities operate on varied election cycles; some years see a municipal election every month.