



CAROLINE COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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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,

On behalf of the Caroline County Board of Elections, I respectfully offer support for Senate Bill 443. This legislation would allow local board counsel to be a registered voter of the State of Maryland, rather than requiring residency within the specific county served by the local board of elections.

Our Board is currently experiencing firsthand the challenges created by the existing residency requirement. Our longtime Board Counsel retired and graciously agreed to return temporarily because we were unable to identify a qualified replacement who resides within Caroline County. In fact, we identified a qualified candidate who was ineligible solely because they live just across the county line. The restriction significantly limits the pool of eligible applicants, particularly in smaller or rural jurisdictions like ours.

Election administration is governed by Maryland law, and Board Counsel's responsibilities focus on interpreting and applying state statutes and regulations. Residency within a specific county does not impact the ability to provide sound, consistent legal advice.

Additionally, advisory work performed by Board Counsel could be conducted remotely, if needed. In-person attendance is generally required only for certain monthly board meetings and during canvasses. Expanding eligibility statewide would not diminish accessibility or service to the Board.

With the 2026 Primary Election approaching, it is critical that we ensure stable and qualified legal support is in place.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 443. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Allison Murphy,
Election Director