

March 23, 2026

Maryland State Senate  
House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

RE: Favorable Testimony on House Bill 357 - Municipalities - Election Dates - Reporting Requirements

Chair Feldman and members of the Committee:

My name is Jamie Shopland, and I am a candidate for Frederick County Council in District 2. I respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 357.

I have served as a chief or other type of election judge in Frederick County for at least 4 election cycles. In that role, I've seen firsthand how much work goes into running secure, accurate, and fair elections and how critical clear communication is to ensuring that voters can actually participate in the democratic process to elect their leaders.

In May 2025, I volunteered to help a candidate in the municipal election in Woodsboro, Maryland. Through that experience, I noticed a real gap in how election information is communicated to the public. Basic details such as when an election is happening, what offices are on the ballot, and how to participate can be difficult to find, inconsistent across jurisdictions, or simply not available in a timely and centralized way. That lack of clarity creates an unnecessary barrier to participation, especially for voters who are trying to engage in local elections for the first time.

House Bill 357 addresses this problem in a practical and effective way.

By requiring municipalities to report election dates to the State Board of Elections and ensuring that this information is prominently displayed at the state, local, and municipal levels, the bill creates a clear, consistent, and reliable source of information for voters. It also ensures that key details like whether an election is regular or special and which offices are on the ballot are easily accessible.

These may seem like small administrative improvements, but they have a meaningful impact. When voters don't know an election is happening, they can't participate. When information is scattered or unclear, participation drops. Transparency and accessibility are foundational to a healthy democracy, and this bill strengthens both.

As someone who has worked inside polling places and seen both the dedication of election workers and the confusion voters sometimes face, I believe this bill is a commonsense step toward making our elections more accessible and easier to navigate.

At a time when we should be doing everything possible to lower barriers to participation, not raise them, House Bill 357 takes a clear step in the right direction. No Marylander should miss an election because they couldn't find basic information about when or how to vote. This bill makes that expectation real.

I urge a favorable report.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jamie Shopland, Candidate  
Frederick County Council District 2  
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By Authority: Friends of Jamie Shopland, Elizabeth Heaney, Treasurer.