

February 11, 2026

**Testimony on SB 241  
Election Law - Individuals Released from State Correctional Facilities -  
Automatic Restoration of Voter Registration  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

**Position:** Favorable

As a lifelong resident of Maryland, a democracy activist and co-lead of Third Act Maryland, I urge a favorable report on SB241, which would ensure eligible voters who are being released from Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) facilities have access to voter registration. The right to vote is fundamental to our democracy, yet thousands of Marylanders who have served their sentences remain disenfranchised due to unnecessary bureaucratic barriers.

**Third Act Maryland, an organization of over 1,000 elders committing to safeguarding our democracy, believes access to voter registration/ability to meaningfully engage in our democracy is critical. Every eligible Marylander deserves a voice, and a vote, in our democracy. This includes individuals who have been released from incarceration who have automatically regained the right to vote.**

Marylanders serving a sentence for felony convictions are prohibited from voting. The Court regularly sends a list of individuals who were once eligible to vote but now prohibited from voting to the State Board of Elections (SBE). They are then automatically removed from the voter rolls. In 2016, Maryland law established that, upon release from incarceration, an individual with a felony conviction automatically regained the right to vote. But barriers to voting access for returning citizens persist. While SBE is required to automatically strike them from the voter rolls, there is no process to ensure their registration is restored and that they are notified of their rights. While the General Assembly passed legislation in 2021 requiring that DPSCS include a paper voter registration form in the packet of materials these individuals receive upon release, the legislation did not go far enough.

SB 241 goes a step further. It would require that SBE use existing secure processes to restore the voter registration of any eligible voter released from a DPSCS facility who was previously registered to vote in Maryland. To facilitate the identification of these voters, each week the DPSCS would send the SBE a list of the names and new residential addresses of anyone released the preceding week from a state correctional facility. Then, SBE confirms eligibility and restores the registration or processes the new registration.

**It is imperative for the preservation of our democratic processes and personal liberties here in Maryland, that this bill receive a favorable report.**

Civic engagement is a key factor in successful reentry. Studies have shown that individuals who vote and participate in their communities are less likely to reoffend. When people leaving incarceration feel included in society, they are more likely to engage in pro-social behaviors and reintegrate successfully.

Voting is the most essential form of political expression and the right to do so is fundamental to an open democracy. SB 241 ensures returning citizens know their rights have been restored and increase their access to and participation in our elections.

We urge a favorable report.

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