



**Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment**

**Testimony on: SB 241 General Assembly –  
(Election Law - Individuals Released From State Correctional  
Facilities - Automatic Restoration of Voter Registration)**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

**Hearing Date: February 11, 2026**

---

Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and distinguished Members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony to you today.

My name is Dr. David Weinberg, and I am writing to you in my capacity as a Policy Strategist for Protect Democracy United, a cross-partisan 501(c)(4) that seeks to strengthen the representative institutions of our system of government. I am also a proud Maryland resident.

Protect Democracy United encourages you to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 241.

This bill would help ensure that individuals being released from Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) facilities face less obstacles to having their voting rights restored.

If we want to build a better society, then we need a better democracy. And at its most fundamental, a well-functioning democracy depends upon everybody's interests being adequately represented.

Whenever a Maryland voter is convicted of a felony, their voter registration is automatically cancelled. But there is no parallel process on the back end to automatically restore their right to vote upon being released from prison.

Since 2018, Maryland has taken impactful steps toward instituting automatic voter registration at a variety of other agencies, including the Motor Vehicle Administration, local social service agencies, and the Maryland healthcare exchange. It's time for us to expand such practices to reach this population of Marylanders whose voices are often marginalized from policy debates.

Lastly, the mechanism that SB 241 uses to institute automatic voter registration for this population is unlikely to create any major new administrative burdens.

DPSCS would be directed to regularly send the State Board of Elections a list of names and addresses for individuals released the previous week from a state correctional facility. Thus, our election officials would be able to evaluate each such person's eligibility for return to the voter rolls after such updates routinely come in, instead of all at once.

At the end of the day, living up to our ideals means enabling every one of our fellow citizens to participate in civic life who is eligible and interested. And that means establishing voter registration - and re-registration - practices that meet people where they are, when they're able, and reduces potential obstacles to their full participation, including once they've finished their sentences and return to life outside of the criminal justice system.

For these reasons, we hope you will issue a favorable report on SB 241. Thank you for your consideration.

---

For more information, contact:

**David A. Weinberg**

Policy Strategist

[david.weinberg@protectdemocracy.org](mailto:david.weinberg@protectdemocracy.org)

---

#### **ABOUT US**

Protect Democracy United is a nonpartisan, nonprofit group working to prevent American democracy from declining into a more authoritarian form of government.