

JEN TERRASA
Legislative District 13
Howard County

Government, Labor, and
Elections Committee

Subcommittees

Election Law

Labor

Oversight Committee on Personnel



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 11, 2026

To: The Honorable Melissa Wells
Chair, Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

From: Delegate Jen Terrasa
District 13, Howard County

Re: Sponsor Testimony in Support of HB 1027 Election Law - Telephone
Voting System - Requirements

Dear Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and Members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present HB 1163 which would lower the voting age to 16 for Board of Education elections in Howard County.

Much has been written and studied about 16-year-old voters. 16-year-olds have voted in **Scotland, Israel, Argentina, Austria, Brazil, and several other democracies**. The results have been encouraging enough that several American cities have already set their voting ages to 16, and more municipalities across the country are joining, eight of which are in Maryland. American cities whose 16-year-olds are now voters:

- Takoma Park, MD
- Chevy Chase, MD
- Hyattsville, MD
- Somerset, MD
- Greenbelt, MD
- Brattleboro, VT
- Riverdale Park, MD
- Newark, NJ
- Mount Rainier, MD
- College Park, MD

After these laws went into effect, research has shown that those under 18 voted four times the rate of those over 18 and they continued to do so over time. There is evidence that it makes these voters more interested in politics and that they become lifelong voters. Some research shows that it actually increased the number of voters in the household. Plus, once implemented, the response to the change has been positive.

If passed by the General Assembly, this bill would then become a constitutional amendment question for the voters of Maryland. The ballot question would appear statewide. To become reality, the measure would need to be approved by a majority of the votes cast statewide, AND a majority of the votes cast in Howard County.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 1465 which gives 16-year-olds an important voice in educational matters that directly affect them.

Thank you.