



Dear members of the Maryland legislature,

We are writing to urge you to support **HB 871**, a bill that would upgrade Maryland's partial automatic voter registration system to **enhanced automatic voter registration** — the gold standard of voter registration systems, adopted by eleven states and Washington D.C.

Despite improvements to Maryland election law in recent years, voter registration remains a real barrier. There are still roughly 650,000 eligible but unregistered citizens in the state. To move Maryland closer to registration of all eligible people, **while also better protecting non-citizens from unintentional registration**, the state should adopt important upgrades to AVR. The importance of strengthening and protecting our democracy has become more evident than ever before in our nation's history. Democracy works best when every eligible Maryland resident can exercise their freedom to vote in an efficient, secure, and inclusive process regardless of background, geography, or demographics.

Enhanced automatic voter registration helps streamline that process and ensures the electorate is reflective of our communities. The bill will accomplish four important goals:

- **Enhanced AVR Improves the Accuracy of Voter Rolls:** When a registered voter provides a new address to MVA for their license, that information is automatically used to update their voter registration record. This ensures election mail reaches the correct address and reduces issues for voters at the polls.
- **Enhanced AVR Saves Time and Money:** Enhanced AVR is low-cost to implement. In addition, Maryland should see significant medium- and long-term cost savings, as has been the case in other states. Delaware had a very similar partial AVR system to Maryland's before upgrading to enhanced automatic voter registration in 2021, **with no additional appropriation**. Other examples: Colorado's Secretary of State estimated costs of \$67,840 to implement EAVR and Minnesota estimated total costs of \$177,000. In Maryland, this policy could shave up to 90 seconds off of MVA transactions, reduce undeliverable election mail, and cut the number of paper registration forms by as much as 91%—all of which will lead to time and cost savings for voters, MVA workers, and election administrators.
- **Enhanced AVR Filters Out Known Non-Citizens** and prevents against making an inadvertent mistake with severe immigration consequences. With Enhanced AVR, if a person applying for an ID provides clear proof of non-citizenship (e.g. a green card), they are **automatically filtered out** of any voter registration opportunity and no data is shared with election officials. This will protect tens of thousands of non-citizens who enter the MVA each year, and prevent mistaken registrations.
 - Enhanced AVR only uses information and documentation that customers are already required to provide to MVA, and that MVA already records and stores in its

database. These requirements for the MVA to provide, record, and store documents are mandated by the federal laws and regulations implementing the REAL ID Act.

- **Enhanced AVR is the Trend in Other States:** Enhanced AVR has already been adopted by 11 states – Alaska, Colorado, Delaware, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington – and Washington D.C. and is the clear trend nationwide.

Finally, enhanced AVR **protects the freedom to vote for historically marginalized communities. At a time when the federal administration is unleashing attacks on voting rights across the country, including and especially Maryland, we cannot stand by and wait for a more opportune time.** The people of Maryland deserve a democracy that works for them, not against them.

Sincerely,

Responsive Gov Action

Advance Maryland

Common Cause MD

League of Women Voters Maryland

AFSCME Council 3

Out for Justice Maryland

Third Act Maryland

Campaign Legal Center

National Council of Jewish Women Maryland

Ranked Choice Voting Maryland

Indivisible Howard County Maryland

Progressive Maryland