



Maryland | Delaware | DC Press Association

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To: Government, Labor & Elections Committee

From: Rebecca Snyder, Executive Director, MDDC Press Association

Date: February 2, 2026

Re: HB 145 – Election Misinformation, Election Disinformation, and Deepfakes – SUPPORT with AMENDMENTS

The Maryland-Delaware-District of Columbia Press Association represents a broad cross-section of local news organizations serving Marylanders every day, from large metro dailies such as the Washington Post and the Baltimore Sun, to hometown newspapers such as the Star Democrat and Dorchester Star, to publications such as The Daily Record, Baltimore Jewish Times, and online-only publications such as the Baltimore Banner, Maryland Matters and Baltimore Brew.

Local news organizations provide verified, independent information about the issues that directly affect people's lives—local government decisions, courts, public safety, education, development, and elections. This reporting helps residents understand what their government is doing, how decisions are made, and how public resources are used.

Strong local news also supports effective governance. When laws are clear, records are accessible, and public processes are transparent, trust improves and disputes decrease. Local journalists help explain complex policies, surface unintended consequences, and ensure that information reaches communities in a practical, accessible way.

We are pleased to support this important bill and have a few suggestions for further improvement. Local news organizations are trusted sources of information about topic of interest to the public. Misinformation, disinformation and deepfakes affect us all and erode the public trust in elections. Our members struggle against the manipulation and distortion of news by generative AI. Our members publish paid advertisements and other related content during the election cycle. We want to make sure the focus of this bill is on the bad actors that are manipulating information and not sweeping news organizations into investigations or burdensome subpoenas.

Section 2-110 supports the additional state responsibility of the State Board of Elections in this fight. However, we are concerned that the State Election Administrator could issue a subpoena to news media organizations that publish advertisements containing misinformation or disinformation. Further, this bill opens the possibility that the State Administrator could file a civil action against a news media organization for publishing that advertisement. When a news media organization takes a paid advertisement, we should not be asked to investigate each



We believe a strong news media is central to a strong and open society.

advertisement, even if it appears realistic, to affirm that it is not a deepfake or disinformation. We ask that the news media be fully exempted from this section, as it is exempted in Section 16-905.

Thank you for considering this amendment. We believe this is an important bill that will help combat the spread of misinformation, disinformation and deepfakes in the context of free and fair elections.