



TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE: House Government, Labor, and Elections

DATE: April 1, 2026

POSITION: Unfavorable

BILL: SB 255

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) respectfully opposes Senate Bill 255, which undermines local control, creates legal and administrative burdens, and forces changes to election systems that local governments may not be ready to implement. MML strongly supports the protection of voting rights; however, this bill is an unworkable overreach for the following reasons:

Increased Legal Risk and Costs. The bill opens municipalities up to lawsuits if the election system is found to be discriminatory. The process for defending against such claims could be expensive and time-consuming. Further, the amended provision that allows the Attorney General or private individuals to bring lawsuits against municipalities could increase the frequency of legal challenges, generating additional financial and administrative burdens.

Local Control Over Election Methods. The bill limits a municipality's ability to independently choose its own election methods. It requires local governments to agree to changes, which may restrict their flexibility in determining what works best for their specific communities. Further, the bill mandates that courts consider proposed remedies but doesn't give deference to local solutions. Municipalities have the unique knowledge necessary to resolve issues internally rather than having courts impose state-driven remedies, which might not always align with local needs or preferences.

In conclusion, this bill is as an overreach of state power, as it gives courts and the Attorney General significant influence over local elections. With respect, our members are concerned that the state does not fully appreciate local context and needs when making decisions about election procedures.

For these reasons, the League respectfully requests that the Committee provide Senate Bill 255 with an unfavorable report.

For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:

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There is a municipal election in every month of the year.