



TESTIMONY TO HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT, LABOR AND ELECTIONS

HB 1001, ELECTION LAW—Local Board of Election Employees—Authority at Polling Places

POSITION: Support

FROM: Linda Kohn, President

DATE: February 25, 2026

The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote and that all citizens should be encouraged to vote. We support HB 1001 because it can help protect that right by ensuring that voters can cast their ballots free from harassment or provocation.

Maryland law allows for election challengers and watchers to be present in a polling place, but it is also inappropriate for challengers or watchers to interfere with elections. While election judges are trained in how to handle a situation with a challenger or watcher, this bill would add protections by offering local Board of Election employees additional authorities to intervene if needed to maintain peace in a polling place. Additional clarity around what constitutes “interference” would be beneficial for all involved—challengers and watchers, employees and election judges, and voters.

This bill strikes a careful balance between allowing the presence of challengers and watchers to ensure transparency but also making sure that local Board of Election employees have the authorities needed to maintain accessible and peaceful elections for the voters.

For these reasons, LWVMD urges a favorable report on HB 1001.