



February 16, 2026

The Honorable Melissa Wells, Chair  
And Members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
Annapolis, Maryland

RE: HB-871 – Enhanced Automatic Voter Registration System- **NEEDS AMENDMENT**

Dear Chair Wells and Committee Members,

The Maryland Federation of Republican Women have serious concerns with the Enhanced Automatic Voter Registration System proposed in HB 871 to require potential voters to “Opt Out” of voter registration rather than to affirmatively “Opt In” to registering to vote.

While HB 871 improves the current automatic voter registration system by **requiring MVA to not electronically transmit** the voter registration information of an applicant to the State Board if the applicant has presented a document in the Real ID transaction demonstrating that the **applicant is NOT a citizen of the United States**. Should it not also state that the applicant must present a document demonstrating U.S. citizenship?

HB 871 needs amendment to insure:

- (1) Each applicant submits document(s) demonstrating they are a United States citizen when registering to vote or being automatically registered to vote.
- (2) All “Automatic Voter Registration agencies” – Motor Vehicle Administration, Maryland Health Benefit Exchange; local departments of social services, and the Mobility Certification Office in the Maryland Transit Administration- must obtain proof of citizenship before forwarding automatic voter registrations for new or renewing applicants for service.
- (3) That voter registration records for current Real ID registrants who have already been forwarded to the State Board via automatic voter registration be reviewed to ensure that each person is a United States citizen.

The need for amendment is clear from the testimony submitted by the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration in 2025 on HB 1113- Enhanced Automatic Voter Registration System- which stated in paragraph 4:

“...the MVA would alter the existing process in several ways. For new applicants, the MVA would be required to **make a determination of citizenship based on documentation presented**. The MVA would store this citizenship information in its database... **At present, the MVA only determines lawful presence in the United States to issue a REAL ID license or ID. Lawful presence is distinct from U.S. Citizenship.**”

Today, we have no idea of how many individuals applied for a REAL ID and were automatically registered to vote who are not U.S. citizens but are “legally present”. Nor do we know about those legally-present non-citizens registered by other automatic voter registration agencies.

When an ineligible registered voter votes, they cross-out the vote of a legitimate registered voter denying that voter their constitutional right.

Please amend this legislation to protect the rights of all legal registered voters.

Sincerely,

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