



February 23, 2026

On behalf of the Secure Families Initiative, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB1066. Secure Families Initiative (SFI) is a nonpartisan organization representing thousands of proud, diverse, active-duty military family members living across the country and stationed abroad. SFI's mission is to mobilize diverse military partners, parents, children, and veterans to vote and advocate for their communities.

This legislation is needed. Maryland's current system of voting leaves the ballot box inaccessible for many in our community. When military service members and their families get stationed far away from home, it can be an isolating and frustrating experience. Getting to vote in elections back home can help families stay connected and ease that transition – it's a reminder of where we belong, and an affirmation that our input matters.

Unfortunately, absentee military voters face high logistical barriers to casting their ballots through existing methods, which in Maryland is voting by mail. Military families stationed overseas or in rural domestic locations often face long wait times for mail delivery and return, which are out of our control. For example, if you are stationed in Japan, some families report a 6-8 week return time.

Electronic ballot return is already securely in use in a majority of states, including Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and West Virginia. A total of 32 states plus the District of Columbia permit at least military service members and their families to return a ballot electronically, often by email or fax. Of those, 13 states expanded eligibility to voters with disabilities in order to make absentee voting fully accessible for all voters.

We urge you to support HB1066.