



Testimony - SB 241,  
Election Law - Individuals Released From State Correctional Facilities - Automatic  
Restoration of Voter Registration  
Favorable  
House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee  
April 1, 2026  
Christopher C. Cano, MPA  
Director of Political & Legislative Affairs on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Honorable Chairwoman Wells & Members of the House Government, Labor, and  
Elections Committee:

SEIU Local 500, represents tens of thousands of public service and workers across  
Maryland who believe adherence to democratic principles and civic participation as the  
duty of all Americans, therefore, we respectfully submit the following favorable  
testimony in support of Senate Bill 241.

SB 241 is a commonsense and overdue step to ensure that Marylanders who are  
legally eligible to vote after release from incarceration are not disenfranchised by  
bureaucratic barriers. Under current practice, too many returning citizens leave state  
correctional facilities with their voting rights restored in theory, but not in practice. This  
bill closes that gap by creating a clear, automatic process to restore voter registration for  
individuals who were registered prior to incarceration and who reside in Maryland upon  
release.

SEIU Local 500 members believe that democracy works best when participation is  
accessible, inclusive, and fair. Workers understand firsthand how administrative hurdles  
can quietly deny people their rights. SB 241 recognizes that restoring the right to vote  
should not depend on navigating paperwork during an already difficult re-entry process.  
Automatic restoration ensures that eligible voters are treated with dignity and accuracy,  
not suspicion or delay.

Importantly, this legislation also protects individuals' privacy by prohibiting disclosure under the Public Information Act of the fact that a voter was registered through the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. That safeguard matters. It prevents stigma, retaliation, or misuse of sensitive information, and affirms that once someone is eligible to vote, they should be treated no differently than any other voter in Maryland.

Our members include school employees, public servants, and higher education workers who see every day how civic engagement strengthens communities and workplaces alike. When returning citizens are fully reintegrated into civic life, families are more stable, communities are safer, and democracy is stronger. SB 241 aligns Maryland law with those values, enabling our state to be the example for representative democracy rather than what we are seeing in other states across the South such as Florida that continue to put hurdles in place for returning citizens, and thus stifling civic participation.

SEIU Local 500 urges this committee to advance SB 241 and continue Maryland's leadership in protecting voting rights and promoting an inclusive democracy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.