

House Bill 871 – Elections – Enhanced Automatic Voter Registration

Position: Favorable

Date: February 16, 2026

To: The Honorable Chair and Members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

My name is Lesley Frost and I am the Chair of National Council of Jewish Women, Maryland State Policy Advocacy Committee (NCJW MD SPA) and I am writing to express strong support for House Bill 871, a policy that would upgrade Maryland's automatic voter registration (AVR) system to the gold standard of Enhanced Automatic Voter Registration (EAVR).

Voter registration remains a barrier in Maryland, with roughly 650,000 eligible but unregistered citizens in the state. To move Maryland closer to registration of all eligible people and strengthen our democracy, we must adopt the important upgrades contained within EAVR.

The adoption of Enhanced AVR will accomplish four critical goals:

- 1. Enhanced AVR Improves the Accuracy of Voter Rolls.** When a registered voter provides a new address to the MVA, that information is automatically used to update their voter registration record. issues for voters at the polls.
- 2. Enhanced AVR Filters Out Known Non-Citizens.** EAVR provides a crucial protection by automatically filtering out any person applying for an ID who provides clear proof of non-citizenship (e.g., a green card). This prevents non-citizens, particularly those who may be limited English proficient, from mistakenly selecting the wrong choice on the MVA portal and accidentally registering to vote.
- 3. Enhanced AVR Saves Time and Money.** EAVR is low-cost to implement. States like Delaware, with a similar system to Maryland's, upgraded to EAVR with no additional appropriation. This upgrade could reduce undeliverable election mail, and reduce the quantity of paper registration forms by as much as 91%, leading to significant time and cost savings for Maryland residents, MVA staff, and election officials.
- 4. Enhanced AVR is the Trend in Other States.** EAVR is the gold standard, adopted by 11 states—including Alaska, Colorado, Delaware, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington—and Washington D.C.

NCJW is the oldest Jewish grassroots organization in the United States, and guided by our Jewish texts and values, we work under our resolutions for "Election laws, policies, and practices that ensure - without domestic or foreign interference - safe, easy and

equitable access to the ballot and eliminate obstacles to the electoral process so that every vote counts and can be verified.”

HB 871 upgrades our electoral system and we urge you to issue a favorable report.

Sincerely,
Lesley Frost
Chair NCJW MD SPA, ncjw.mdacts@gmail.com

7707 Wisconsin Avenue
Bethesda MD 20814, lesleyfrost0@gmail.com