

**HOUSE GOVERNMENT, LABOR, AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE**  
**HOUSE BILL 855**  
**COMMON OWNERSHIP COMMUNITIES – CANDIDATE OR PROPOSITION SIGNS – DISPLAY PERIOD**  
February 18, 2026

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

I am writing in support of **HB 855 – Common Ownership Communities – Candidate or Proposition Signs – Display Period**, which would extend from 30 to 45 days the time during which a common ownership community may not restrict the display of candidate or ballot question signs prior to an election.

I am a resident of Annapolis and serve on the board of my homeowner’s association (HOA), which prohibits all signage except one “For Sale” or “For Rent” sign. While HOAs may regulate signage generally, state law prohibits them from banning political signs during a defined period surrounding an election—currently 30 days before the election through eight days after.

During the most recent election, the interpretation of this law became a point of contention within my HOA. Although counsel ultimately confirmed that political signs must be permitted during the statutory period, disagreement arose over what “30 days before” means. I believed it should be calculated from the start of early voting; others interpreted it to mean 30 days before Election Day. The statute’s lack of clarity created unnecessary confusion and conflict.

In 2025, the House of Delegates unanimously passed HB 363 (136–0), which would have clarified the law to measure the period from the start of early voting. However, the bill did not receive a vote in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

HB 855 reintroduces that clarification with two modifications: it extends the period to 45 days before the start of early voting and designates the bill as an emergency measure so that it may take effect before the June 2026 Primary Election. The 45-day period reflects the increased use of vote-by-mail and ensures residents have a meaningful opportunity to express political views before ballots are cast.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 855 to ensure that residents of common ownership communities can reasonably exercise their right to political speech on their own property.

Thank you,

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