

HB 1403: Election Law - Initiative Process: Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Government, Labor & Elections Committee:

I am writing to strongly urge you to **OPPOSE HB 1403**.

Maryland's representative system—where elected legislators deliberate, debate, and craft laws with public hearings, committee review, fiscal analysis, and accountability—ensures thoughtful, balanced policymaking. Introducing citizen initiatives will bypass this process, leading to poorly drafted, emotionally driven, or special-interest measures that lack expert input, long-term impact assessment, or compromise. Many states with initiatives face problems like conflicting laws, unfunded mandates, budget instability (e.g., from tax-cut initiatives), and voter confusion from complex ballot questions.

The bill's 10% signature threshold (with geographic limits) is high but still allows well-funded or narrowly focused groups to force statewide votes on issues that may not reflect broad consensus, creating instability. The 2-year protection for new laws is a weak safeguard that could be circumvented or ignored in practice.

Maryland's current system already provides ample opportunities for citizen input through petitions to the legislature, public testimony, and constitutional amendments proposed by the General Assembly. Adding a citizen initiative process could undermine representative government and allow citizens uneducated in the law to initiate bad policy without sufficient checks.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to **vote against HB 1403**.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of my concerns regarding this important election and governance reform legislation.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals