

**Testimony of Susan Greenhalgh
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Free Speech For People
Submitted to the
Maryland General Assembly
Government, Labor and Elections Committee
Contact: susan@freespeechforpeople.org**

Re: HB 1027-UNFAVORABLE

February 23, 2026

Thank you Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and members of the Committee for the opportunity to offer testimony on HB 1027.

I serve as the senior advisor on election security for Free Speech For People, a national, non-profit non-partisan legal advocacy organization dedicated to defending our democracy and our Constitution. I have studied electronic ballot return for twenty years and have authored several reports on it, with partners including the American Association for the Advancement of Science¹ and the Association of Computing Machinists.² Free Speech For People is committed to preserving and enhancing access to the ballot for all voters, and to protecting the security and integrity of all ballots cast to ensure our elections represent the will of the voters. We support the intention of HB 1027 to make voting easier for voters with print disabilities, but we cannot support this approach because it introduces online voting.

HB 1027 purports to permit “telephone voting.” To be clear, all telephones today are connected to, and transmit data via, the internet, which means that any “telephone voting” system would include the same security risks as an internet voting system. Further, the language in HB 1027 could be interpreted to apply to a mobile phone application.

It is well-researched, settled science that returning voted ballot information electronically over the internet is dangerously and unacceptably insecure. This has

¹ Greenhalgh, S., Newell, S., “Leveraging Electronic Ballot Return Safely and Securely During the COVID-19 Pandemic,” *American Association for the Advancement of Science*, (Jun 2020). <https://www.aaas.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Leveraging%20Electronic%20Balloting%20Options%20Safely%20and%20Securely%20During%20the%20COVID-19%20Pandemic.pdf>

² Greenhalgh, S., et al, “Email and Internet Voting: The Overlooked Threat to Election Security,” *ACM U.S. Technology Policy Committee*, (Oct. 18, 2018). <https://www.acm.org/binaries/content/assets/public-policy/jtreportemailinternetvoting.pdf>

been established by the Department of Homeland Security, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the FBI, and U.S. Election Assistance Commission, as well as the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, and countless public and private studies. *Furthermore, the Maryland Department of Legislative Services has already conducted extensive and exhaustive research into this matter and presented its findings to the Committee, concluding that electronic return was unacceptably insecure. **The Department of Legislative Services also concluded that Maryland was unlikely to face successful litigation to force online ballot return under the Americans with Disabilities Act.***

Existing security controls do not mitigate the security risks inherent with mobile voting.

The security controls included in HB 1027, such as printing paper ballots after transmission, “air-gapping” the tabulation device, and requiring encryption, do not eliminate the high risk of electronic ballot return. These are provisions that vendors and proponents of online voting promote to obfuscate the insoluble security risks inherent with electronic ballot return.

We expand on these security risks of electronic ballot return in detail in our testimony on HB 1066 and welcome the opportunity to provide additional information and answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Greenhalgh

Senior Advisor on Election Security

Free Speech For People.