



## TESTIMONY

**COMMITTEE:** House Government, Labor, and Elections

**DATE:** April 1, 2026

**POSITION:** Unfavorable

**BILL:** SB 848

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) appreciates the intent of SB 848 to improve transparency and public access to municipal election information, and we thank the sponsor for working collaboratively with us on amendments to address several of our initial concerns. As introduced, the bill contained a number of provisions that raised practical implementation challenges for municipalities, particularly those with limited staff capacity. The amendments developed in coordination with MML helped improve timelines and better align the bill with how municipal election cycles operate.

However, as the bill moved through the chamber, additional amendments were introduced and adopted that significantly change the scope and impact of the legislation in ways that are not workable for municipalities. Most notably, the bill now applies its reporting and notice requirements to special elections.

Special elections are, by nature, unpredictable and often conducted under compressed timelines to respond to vacancies or other time-sensitive circumstances. In many cases, they are triggered by the death of an elected official, and municipalities move quickly to fill the position so that governing bodies can continue to function effectively and maintain continuity of operations. Imposing the same reporting requirements and timelines designed for regularly scheduled elections onto these situations creates substantial administrative challenges. Municipalities may not have sufficient time to meet these requirements without diverting limited staff resources or risking noncompliance.

Importantly, these additional requirements do not meaningfully enhance transparency. Special elections are already publicly noticed and conducted in accordance with existing legal requirements. Instead, the bill introduces unnecessary complexity at precisely the moments when local governments are working to respond quickly and responsibly to unexpected vacancies.

MML remains supportive of efforts to improve transparency and coordination with the State Board of Elections. However, the inclusion of special elections without appropriate flexibility undermines the practical implementation of the bill and places an undue burden on municipalities. For these reasons, MML respectfully requests an unfavorable report on SB 848 as amended.

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For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:  
Angelica Bailey Thupari: Director, Advocacy and Public Policy, [angelicab@mdmunicipal.org](mailto:angelicab@mdmunicipal.org)

*Maryland's 157 municipalities operate on varied election cycles; some years see a municipal election every month.*