



TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE: House Government, Labor, and Elections

DATE: February 11, 2026

POSITION: Favorable with Amendments

BILL: HB 357

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) appreciates the intent behind House Bill 357 and thanks the Sponsor for working collaboratively with us on good-faith amendments. As introduced, the bill was not fundamentally problematic, but it did raise several administrative and implementation concerns for municipalities that we believe can be addressed through modest, targeted changes. For that reason, MML's position is Favorable with Amendments, and we respectfully request adoption of the amendments discussed with the Sponsor.

As originally drafted, House Bill 357 requires municipalities to report the dates of both regular and special municipal elections to the State Board of Elections (SBE), with a minimum six-month notice for regular elections and five business days for special elections. It also requires municipalities, the State Board, and county boards of elections to publish municipal election information on their websites, and mandates that municipalities submit certified election results and related materials electronically to SBE within 30 days.

MML supports the bill's underlying goal of improving transparency and public access to municipal election information. Our concerns focused on the creation of new reporting obligations, particularly around advance notice of election dates and special elections, that could unintentionally increase the risk of noncompliance for small municipal clerks' offices without meaningfully improving voter access.

To address these concerns, MML and the Sponsor have developed amendments that preserve the bill's transparency objectives while aligning them with existing municipal practices:

- Municipalities that maintain a website would continue to be responsible for publishing their upcoming election dates.
- The requirement for municipalities to separately report upcoming regular and special election dates to SBE would be removed.
- Municipalities would report the date of their next regular election to SBE as part of the existing post-election results submission process, ensuring accuracy without creating a new standalone reporting obligation.
- SBE would remain responsible for publishing a statewide list of upcoming regular municipal elections, while the requirement to publish special election dates would be removed.

These amendments reduce administrative burdens, minimize duplicative reporting, and integrate new transparency goals into existing, well-understood election workflows. For these reasons, MML respectfully urges adoption of the proposed amendments.

For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:
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Maryland's 157 municipalities operate on varied election cycles; some years see a municipal election every month.