

HB0871_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

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Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#/0871- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Election Law - Enhanced Automatic Voter Registration System

TO: Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and members of the Government, Labor and Elections Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0871, **Election Law - Enhanced Automatic Voter Registration System**

The Brennan Center for Justice explains what *Automatic Voter Registration* constitutes.¹

Outdated voter registration systems contribute to the United States' low participation rates. Automatic voter registration could put every eligible voter on the rolls and give more Americans a voice. The United States has one of the lowest voter turnout rates among developed nations.

That's at least partly due to our outdated voter registration systems. Too often, voters show up to the polls to find their names are not on the rolls. More than a quarter of eligible voters are not registered to vote.

Automatic voter registration (AVR) makes registering "opt-out" instead of "opt-in." Eligible citizens who interact with government agencies, such as the Department of Motor Vehicles, are registered to vote or have their existing registration information updated automatically, unless they actively decline. The voter's information is transmitted to election officials electronically rather than via paper registration forms. These cost-effective reforms increase registration rates and clean up the voter rolls.

This bill make interactions with the MVA and any other agency a point of contact for automatic voter registration. It gives Maryland a path to increase voting by more persons.

This bill will require the Motor Vehicle Administration to implement an enhanced automatic voter registration system on or before January 1, 2029; establishing requirements regarding the transmission of enhanced automatic voter registration information by the Administration, the processing of the voter registration information by the State Board of Elections, and the sending of notices by the State Board; authorizing the State Board to implement certain enhanced automatic voter registration at certain agencies with their consent; etc.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0871.

¹ <https://www.brennancenter.org/topics/voting-elections/voting-reform/automatic-voter-registration>