



February 17, 2026

Delegate Melissa Wells, Chair, Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

Dear Del. Wells:

CHARM Maryland, in furtherance of our Vision and Mission, **OPPOSES**
HB855 “Common Ownership Communities – Candidate or Proposition Signs – Display Period”

By increasing from 30 to 45 days the current prohibition to display candidate or proposition signs, this bill further restricts residents and homeowners living in common ownership communities (COC) from expressing personal support or opinions by displaying signs, unlike other homeowners in Maryland who can currently freely exercise that right. No explanation or justification is offered for this increased prohibition. Democratic principles allow electioneering to happen even during voting, with spatial restrictions – e.g., forbidding political signs very close to the polling place – but not “days before voting” restrictions.

CHARM Maryland is a civic advocacy organization, incorporated in the state of Maryland, dedicated to fighting for the rights and interests of individual homeowners who live in common ownership communities. Current Maryland law is tilted in the interest of Boards of Directors and their management companies. We hope to change that, with your help, by amending the laws of our state.

CHARM Maryland envisions a future where individual homeowners in common ownership communities can live without fear of their own association, which shall abide by the law; be transparent, accountable, and fair; and be welcoming to all residents.

CHARM Maryland seeks to advocate for any bill that would advance our Mission, to

- * End predatory practices of homeowner associations
- * Protect the civil rights and financial security of the individual homeowner; and/or
- * Strengthen the democratic aspects of elections and decision making in homeowner associations.

Please add this letter to the records of public comment about this bill, and kindly advise us of opportunities to provide testimony or otherwise support this bill.

Sincerely,

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Steven Sellers Lapham, President, CHARM Maryland, Inc.

Common Ownership Community Homeowners Advocating for Reform (CHARM) in Maryland

EMAIL: CHARM.MD.contact

WEBSITE: www.charm-md.org