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DEPUTY SPEAKER PRO TEM

Appropriations Committee

Subcommittees

Vice Chair, Health and Social Services

Oversight Committee on Pensions

Joint Committee on Administrative,
Executive, and Legislative Review

President, Women Legislators of Maryland



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Delegate Dana Jones
Before the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

In Support of HB 621
Local Boards of Elections - Board Counsel - Qualifications
February 18th 2026, 1:00 pm

For the record, I am Delegate Dana Jones, representing District 30A in the House of Delegates.

Chair Wells, Vice-Chair Kerr, and members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee, I am here today to introduce HB 621, Local Boards of Elections - Board Counsel - Qualification. The purpose of this legislation is to repeal the requirement that a local board of elections attorney must be a registered voter of the county they work for.

Current law requires that a counsel to a local board of elections must be both admitted to practice law in the State and be a registered voter of the county. The primary reason for this legislation is that the current law unduly limits the pool for local election boards to hire from to fill the position. This impact is disproportionately felt in small jurisdictions. For example, Caroline County is currently unable to replace their retiring counsel with someone who is registered to vote in Caroline County. This greatly impacts the ability for our local LBE's to properly prepare for and staff our elections.

This law was also created before Maryland adopted uniform election laws. Before then, it was reasonable to require an attorney to live within the jurisdiction in order to expect them to have an adequate understanding of the particularities of the county's election law. Today, all jurisdictions follow the same voting procedures and have the same voting equipment, making this provision obsolete. Additionally, this provision of the law is not congruent with modern realities. At the time of its passing, modern communication and information technologies did not exist. These

digital advancements, such as email, Zoom, and cell phones, now make it easy for any attorney within the state to effectively serve a jurisdiction from anywhere.

In closing, this change is necessary to ensure that Maryland LBE's, especially those from our smallest jurisdictions, are able to quickly and efficiently hire counsel when necessary. As hiring for election officials has become more difficult and their jobs more demanding, this change is a common sense solution to modernize standards for counsels to local election boards.¹

I'm proud to partner with the Maryland Association of Election Officials on this initiative and to have Senator Mary Beth Carozza as the cross-file in the Senate. I respectfully urge a favorable report from the committee on HB 621.

Thank you,



Delegate Dana Jones

