

HOUSE BILL 645

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CF SB 488

By: **Delegates Feldmark, Atterbeary, Addison, Allen, Bagnall, Boaf, Chang, Chisholm, Conaway, Ebersole, Embry, Fair, Forbes, Howard, A. Johnson, S. Johnson, D. Jones, Kelly, Kerr, Lehman, R. Lewis, McCaskill, Mireku-North, Moon, Pasteur, Rogers, Schmidt, Simmons, Simpson, Taylor, Terrasa, and Valderrama**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2023

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Election Law – Electronic Ballot Return System – Study and Request for**
3 **Proposals**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of Legislative Services to complete a study
5 on the creation of an electronic ballot return system on or before a certain date;
6 requiring the State Board of Elections to issue a request for proposals for an
7 electronic ballot return system on or before a certain date; and generally relating to
8 an electronic system for the return of voted ballots.

9 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
10 That:

11 (a) The Department of Legislative Services, in consultation with experts
12 representing the disability rights and military communities, shall complete a study on the
13 creation of an electronic ballot return system.

14 (b) The study shall include:

15 (1) the impact on voters with disabilities and absent uniformed services
16 voters and overseas voters, as defined in the federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizens
17 Absentee Voting Act, of requiring ballots delivered electronically to be returned in paper
18 form;

19 (2) best practices for accessibility for electronic return of ballots;

20 (3) best practices for securing an electronic ballot return system;

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (4) the integration of an electronic ballot return system with the State's
2 existing election infrastructure;

3 (5) which voters are eligible to return ballots electronically in states where
4 electronic ballot return is authorized;

5 (6) the mechanism for voters to opt in to electronic ballot return;

6 (7) the cost of implementing an electronic ballot return system; and

7 (8) any changes to the Election Law Article that are necessary to
8 implement electronic ballot return.

9 (c) On or before December 1, 2023, the Department of Legislative Services shall
10 submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly in accordance
11 with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article.

12 (d) On or before January 1, 2024, the State Board of Elections shall issue a
13 request for proposals for an electronic ballot return system.

14 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June
15 1, 2023.