



TESTIMONY FOR HB0037

Bill Number: HB0037

Bill Title: Election Law – References to Absentee Voting in Communications – Mail-in Voting

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Julie Palakovich Carr

Committee: Ways and Means

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante

Position: SUPPORT

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0037 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state. We have over 30,000 members across the state. We believe firmly in ensuring that everyone can exercise their right to vote. Today, there are many people who would like to vote but cannot physically get to the polls or are turned off by long lines in their polling places during the window of time that they can get to the polls.

Additionally, most people believe that to get an absentee ballot, you have to provide a reason, so they just don't vote. Changing the way that we communicate about voting is an important step in making people think that they can request a ballot and vote by mail.

When I did phonebanking in 2018, I spoke to a lovely woman who told me that she was in a nursing home and would love to vote, but she said 'Dearie, I'm 90 years old and mostly blind. You don't want me driving to the polls.' I asked her if anyone ever gave her a ballot, and she said she hadn't seen a ballot since she got in the nursing home years ago. I told her she could get an absentee ballot, and she said: 'I'm not absent. I'm here.'

Imagine if we could convince people to request mail-in ballots, instead of losing their votes because they don't believe they can get an 'absentee ballot'.

I support this bill and I believe it will help allow more people to vote. I recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

Cecilia Plante
Co-Chair, Maryland Legislative Committee

