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Education, Health, and  
Environmental Affairs Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021

The Honorable Paul Pinsky, Chair and Members

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Re: SB 36 – Election Integrity Act

Position: Favorable

Chairman Pinsky and EHEA Committee Members:

This bill establishes that an agent of an absentee voter (authorized by the voter to pick up and deliver the voter's absentee ballot), in addition to meeting existing requirements, (1) must be a family member or member of the household of the voter; (2) may not be a campaign volunteer of a candidate on the ballot; and (3) may not pick up or deliver more than three ballots during each election.

The intent of this legislation is to place safeguards in effect to limit the possibility of ballot harvesting. For those unaware, ballot harvesting occurs when a voter has possession of a ballot and is approached by an individual to offer assistance in completing and returning a ballot. If the voter accepts, the individual is given the ballot. The individual could repeat this process unlimited times and collect a large number of ballots.

As we saw in this last election with widespread mail in voting and drop boxes, it creates a large number of absentee ballots. Allowing campaign volunteers to collect an unrestricted number of ballots in an unsupervised setting opens the door for fraud in elections. This bill would also protect vulnerable voters from undue influence if a campaign volunteer were to approach them to collect a ballot.

I respectfully ask for a favorable vote on SB36.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jason Gallion".

Senator Jason Gallion

District 35 – Cecil & Harford Counties