



Testimony of The National Vote at Home Coalition In Support of Maryland's SB 831

Thank you Chair Pinsky and committee members for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 831. The National Vote at Home Coalition is pleased to join local leaders in support of this measure, with additional technical amendments, and are grateful for your time and attention.

After drop boxes were introduced last year, voters and election officials have spoken: they were a massive success. It's not a wonder why: research¹ has shown that mail voters who vote by drop box are more confident that their vote will reach officials in time to be counted. Drop boxes can also save the state a significant amount of money by dramatically reducing the amount spent on return postage for ballots. We support the efforts in this bill to make them more widely available in the future.

We are grateful that the sponsor has been considering ways to simplify processes and ensure that all voters have their voices heard. Technical improvements, like allowing the preprocessing of ballots 15 days before the election, will lead to much quicker results and allow election officials to allocate their staff time more effectively.

We are also greatly supportive of the ability for voters to be notified of deficiencies in their absentee requests, but also in their returned ballot envelopes. This notification and "cure" process is one of our top recommendations to every state and we are thrilled it has been included in this bill. Last year in an effort to reduce rejected ballots the state worked hard to implement some temporary processes and to create a robust cure process, no doubt contributing to Maryland's incredible progress of decreasing its ballot rejection rate by more than 45% since 2016.² This bill codifies that cure process into law, and requires that voters are notified when a correctable error is found with their ballot and given a chance to fix it.

We stand ready to assist however possible to offer some technical amendments to make sure the details of these reforms work as intended. Maryland has made great strides in expanding access and

¹ 2018 paper [Do Drop Boxes Improve Voter Turnout? Evidence from King County, Washington](#)

² Based on 2020 ballot rejection rate of 0.24% (from rejected [mail](#), [provisional](#), and [total turnout](#)) and 2016 ballot rejection rate of 0.47% (from [EAVS](#) data ((B13a+E1d+C4b) / F1a))

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options to voters and we urge this committee to support SB 831 with technical amendments to codify and build upon the successes of 2020's election reforms.