



BALTIMORE CITY

SUBSTANCE ABUSE DIRECTORATE

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Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

February 18, 2021

Senate Bill 525

Baltimore City - Centralized Booking Facility – Voting Information and Early Voting Polling Place Support

The Baltimore City Substance Abuse Director (BSCAD) is an advocacy and provider organization comprised of 30 Baltimore City substance use disorders treatment providers representing all levels of care from prevention to residential treatment. Our mission is the promotion of high-quality, best-practice and effective substance use disorders treatment for the citizens of Baltimore City.

The Baltimore City Substance Abuse Directorate supports Senate Bill 525. BCSAD has long advocated for policies that help people involved with the criminal justice system avoid some of the collateral damage caused by our drug policies. The disproportionate impact of our society's drug policies on communities of color has led to the same voter disenfranchisement inequities.

SB 525 recognizes not all people in jail are guilty of any crime. This bill will ensure that people who are incarcerated who are eligible to vote know they retain this constitutional right. Moreover, the bill will ensure that people who have the right to vote have the opportunity to register and cast their ballots. People who are in detention, awaiting trial, retain their voting rights. To not provide them the opportunity to exercise that right is an unwarranted punishment.

Providing people in pre-trial detention the opportunity to exercise their right to vote is a step to address the historic racial inequities in our voting laws.

We urge your support of Senate Bill 525.

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