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Land Use and Ethics Subcommittee

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Joint Committee on Ending  
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**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB 190: Procurement – Specialized Printing Services Contracts – Board of Public Works Approval**  
Health and Government Operations \* February 4, 2021

***What this bill does***

HB190 is a straightforward bill that modifies the definition of “services” as it pertains to procurement in Maryland. This bill expands the definition of services to include “specialized printing services”, defined as “services for the printing of a ballot, as defined in §1-101 of the Election Law Article, or a document that contains sensitive or personally identifiable information.” This change in definition ensures that the Board of Public Works (BPW) authorizes and approves any contract made with a specialized ballot printing service, as the BPW reviews all spending on “services” over \$200,000. In contrast, the board does not review contracts made for “supplies” unless a single commodity costs over \$200,000. The bill also clarifies that specialized printing services are not to be classified as “supplies.”

The intent of this bill is to ensure that the BPW reviews and approves the award of a procurement contract for specialized printing services before the unit may execute the contract. I was motivated to investigate the company supplying our ballots during the delays, but quickly discovered that the contract approval was not transparent in any way and had not gone through the Board of Public Works process. After discussion with a procurement specialist at the BPW, I worked with DLS to craft this corrective legislation.

***Why this bill matters***

I have the good fortune of representing Councilmanic District 1 in Baltimore. This district’s ballots were incorrectly printed, resulting in massive confusion, delayed results, and distrust in the system overall during the June primary election. This confusion was in addition to the severely delayed ballots that resulted in 1 million registered voters in Baltimore City and Montgomery County receiving their ballots late — or not at all.

The delay was due in part to the fact that Minnesota-based vendor SeaChange did not deliver ballots on schedule, nor did they notify the Maryland State Board of Elections about the delay. This disruption threatened Maryland’s democratic voting process and caused undue stress on candidates, legislators and voters.

***Why you should vote for this bill***

With oversight from the BPW, we can ensure transparency and accountability in our ballot procurement processes, upholding the integrity of our elections. I hope you will grant a favorable report on HB190.