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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
IN SUPPORT OF
HB 0746 – ELECTION LAW – ABSENTEE BALLOT ENVELOPES –
PARTY AFFILIATION**

February 16, 2021

Get Money Out (GMOM) is an all-volunteer organization established eight years ago. We want all citizens to have equal access to the ballot and an equal say in governance. Through our grassroots actions, we have signed up over 9,000 supporters.

We are living in an era of great partisan division and distrust. Social and psychological factors may bear greatly on a citizen's attitude toward voting. The inclusion of party affiliation on a primary ballot may be convenient for local election officials, but it may also increase suspicion about the security of the ballot.

We also have experienced a huge increase in mail-in voting because of the pandemic. This trend may continue, and we may wish to actively encourage this trend for many reasons. States with widespread mail-in voting report higher turnout over an extended period than they experienced before they encouraged no-excuse mail-in voting. An MIT study reports: "The safest conclusion to draw is that extending VBM [vote by mail] options increases turnout modestly in midterm and presidential elections but may increase turnout more in primaries, local elections, and special elections. This modest increase likely comes in two ways: by bringing marginal voters into the electorate and by retaining voters who might otherwise drop out of the electorate."ⁱ

On balance, we believe that a sufficient number of voters will perceive unmarked return envelopes as being more secure than those marked with party affiliation to justify the minimal extra step in processing ballots. Therefore, we request a favorable report on HB 746.

ⁱ <https://electionlab.mit.edu/research/voting-mail-and-absentee-voting>