



Maryland Association of Election Officials

Representing the Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland

January 22, 2021

Delegate Anne Kaiser, Chair
Maryland House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: HB341 – Election – Absentee Ballot Canvass – Start and Release of Tabulation -

Delegate Kaiser and Committee Members:

My name is David Garreis and I am the President of the Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) as well as the Deputy Director of the Anne Arundel County Board of Elections. MAEO represents the local boards of elections throughout the State of Maryland. I am here today representing myself and MAEO with information and suggested amendments of HB341 – Election – Absentee Ballot Canvass – Start and Release of Tabulation.

In the 2020 Presidential election, local boards of election offices were granted permission to begin opening and tabulating vote-by-mail ballots largely due to the fact that we had a primarily vote-by-mail election. Offices were tasked with hiring more temporary help in the offices to prepare for the canvass and there were many more tasks required to prepare for vote-by-mail and an in-person election. Local boards of elections were largely successful in providing timely results post-election because of being able to open ballots ahead of time; however, we would like to propose the following amendments regardless of the type of election we continue to have in Maryland – primarily in-person or primarily vote-by mail:

- Allow opening of ballots up to 18 days before election day
- The State Board of Elections shall create permanent regulations and guidelines for opening and preparation of vote-by-mail ballots prior to the allowed start of the canvass
- Ballots opened prior to election day shall be allowed to be reviewed and duplicated (if needed) by one or more teams comprised of a minimum of two persons who:
 - Are from at least two different political parties; and
 - Are not related to the candidates or candidate's treasurer, including their spouse, parent or step-parent, child or step-child, sibling or step-sibling, grandparent, aunt, uncle, or any such relationship established through marriage or civil union
- Any ballot preparation pursuant to this shall be conducted under the supervision of the local board or election director
 - The election director shall confer with the local board or State Board of Elections if necessary
- Ballots opened and reviewed prior to election day shall be secured and under surveillance at the local board of elections
- Ballots may begin to be scanned at 7am on election day.
 - Results shall not be released until after all precincts have reported in-person election results to the State Board of Elections.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these amendments. If you have any questions, please contact me at 410-222-0405 or david.garreis@maryland.gov.

www.maeo.net