



**Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council**

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

Ways & Means Committee

**HB 212: Election Law - Signature Verification of Absentee Ballots and Absentee
Ballot Applications and Ballot Canvassing**

February 1, 2022

Position: Oppose

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) is an independent, public policy organization that creates changes to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. The DD Council is led by people with developmental disabilities and their families. **It is within that context that the DD Council opposes HB 212 due to the disproportionate and negative impacts it would have on voters with developmental disabilities.**

WHAT does this legislation do:

- HB 212 requires the verification of a voter's signature on an application for an absentee ballot and on the return envelope of the submitted absentee ballot by comparing the signature on the ballot to the one the voter provided in the voter's previous registration record.

WHY is this a problem?

- The bill creates barriers for people with developmental disabilities, who are more likely to vote by absentee ballot due to existing voting location accessibility issues¹.
- It adds several unnecessary layers of difficulty and puts into place a convoluted process to request and submit an absentee ballot.

Voters with developmental disabilities want and need access to meaningful participation in the electoral process. HB 212 would be a step in the wrong direction. **For that reason, the DD Council opposes HB 212.**

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¹https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/voters/Disability_and_voting_accessibility_in_the_2020_elections_final_report_on_su

urvey_results.pdf