

TESTIMONY OPPOSING BILL HB0212

Election Law - Signature Verification of Absentee Ballots and Absentee Ballot Applications and Ballot Canvassing

TO: Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair
Washington, and members of the Ways and
Means Committee

FROM: Chris Apple
7001 Cradlerock Farm Court
Columbia, MD 21045
District 13

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This testimony is in opposition of HB0212. I believe this bill would put an unnecessary requirement on mail-in ballots that is confusing and difficult to rectify.

Signature matching is not necessarily a validator of identity. One must know what their signature looked like on their voter registration. I know that my own signature has drifted over time, and cannot remember what my signature looked like when I registered to vote 20 years ago. For some people it was even longer ago.

While the bill presents some options for ballot cures, I believe this will be insufficient to address issues that might arise. I spoke to people who called Nevada voters to help them cure their 2020 ballots. Deadlines were tight, and sometimes it proved very difficult to reach voters. The voters did not realize they had spoiled their own ballots, so they had no reason to believe they needed to take action.

The good news is our elections are *already* secure. Maryland has very few known cases of voter fraud.^{1 2} One website found less than one instance of voter fraud *per year* in Maryland.³ I believe that this law will do much more harm than good, by disqualifying valid ballots that were accidentally spoiled.

I respectfully urge the committee to issue an unfavorable report for HB0212.

¹ Amara, Kate. "Expert: Maryland hasn't had widespread fraud with in-person or mail-in voting." <https://www.wbaltv.com/article/expert-says-no-widespread-voting-fraud-in-maryland/34226640#>

² Tan, Rebecca. "Md. elections officials say video's allegation of ballot fraud is untrue. But it's already gone viral." https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/md-politics/ballot-fraud-denied-montgomery-county/2020/10/21/aee4de64-13dd-11eb-bc10-40b25382f1be_story.html

³ Heritage Foundation. *Election Fraud Cases*. <https://www.heritage.org/voterfraud/search?state=MD>