



## **TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE**

### **HB 1112 Registered Voter List and Petitions (Ballot Petition Modernization Act)**

**POSITION: Favorable**

**By: Nancy Soreng, President**

**Date: March 7, 2023**

The League of Women Voters of Maryland supports HB 1112 Registered Voter List and Petitions. The core of our mission is to make voting and every citizen part of the democratic process. This bill is a step in the right direction.

LWVMD has long supported the use of electronic signatures as a means for more Marylanders to engage in their rights to register, sign petitions, and vote by mail. In a move that would be a giant leap forward for accessibility and those Marylanders who live with disabilities daily, HB 1112 would allow voters to sign petitions electronically. The wide range of signing options included in this bill would also allow more advantages to the disability community.

In a [2010 Utah Supreme Court](#) case, it was found that e-signatures can and should be used. Not only were they deemed secured and easily protected, but as signatures can constitute any mark that the individual intends to represent their signature, it opens the pathways to those voters who could not sign their names at previously held standards.

Furthermore, HB 1112 also allows for validation of the first signature if a second signature is present. LWVMD is keenly aware that many voters are too often forgetful if they have already signed petitions, whether that is from being presented too many or just happenstance, or they are just enthusiastic about participating in the democratic process. However, we also know that some voters will not sign at all if they fear not being counted or even penalized if they accidentally sign twice. This bill would address those concerns.

Lastly, this bill wisely allows a provision for remediation for those signers who may need to clarify that their signature is their own or that in which the system did not pick up the first time. Instead of throwing it out entirely, it allows a way in which the voter can still be counted.

**We urge a favorable report on House bill 1112.**