



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HB 1088 – Election Law - Automatic Voter Registration - Alterations

POSITION: Support

BY: Linda T. Kohn, President

Date: February 27, 2024

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active citizen participation, and that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. Making voter registration easy for all eligible citizens is essential to ensuring the ability to exercise that right.

The League was pleased to support AVR when it was first implemented in Maryland. This bill seeks to streamline the process for unregistered citizens who have confirmed citizenship and to make sure their voter registration information is up to date and correct.

Instead of asking a citizen if they would like to register to vote when they are interacting with the Motor Vehicle Administration or the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, they will automatically be registered providing the agency has all of the proper documentation to assure they are qualified to vote. The new or updated registration would be electronically transmitted to the State Board of Elections who will be required to mail the applicant a notice that they have been registered to vote and give the opportunity to decline registration, and if they so choose, designate a party affiliation.

If applicants do not decline to register to vote within a set period of time after the mailing, their name is added to the official list of registered voters. If they decline it won't be added to the list of registered voters, and if they select a party, that will be recorded by SBE.

We believe that this bill provides updated improvements to our current system and request a favorable report on HB1088.