



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND, INC.

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

HB 1007 – FREEDOM TO VOTE ACT

POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

BY: BARBARA SCHNACKENBERG AND NANCY SORENG CO-PRESIDENTS

DATE: MARCH 31, 2016

The League of Women Voters was founded on the concept that voter participation is an essential element of a successful democracy. Our organization has worked for over 96 years to assure the right to vote for every citizen. This legislation would provide an opportunity for hundreds of thousands of Maryland citizens to exercise this right. This is why we support modernizing our voter registration system.

Bill HB1007 has been amended significantly and the result is a workable, safe, secure and efficient way to register more people to vote so they may participate in the democratic process. This legislation modernizes Maryland's current paper-based system by expanding secure electronic opportunities for eligible Marylanders to be registered to vote. HB1007 also expands the number of agencies where citizens who are qualified to vote are given the opportunity to register. Additionally it registers citizens who have interacted with the MVA or Maryland Health Benefit Exchange within the last five years and sends them a notice via postal mail that they have the option to decline registration or select a party.

We do suggest these two amendments that would include strong protection language for anyone inadvertently registered:

- Section 3-203.1, (J) strike "BASED ON INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE STATE BOARD BY" and insert "WITH THE OFFICIAL AUTHORIZATION OF"
- Section 3-203.1, (K) (1) strike "WITHIN 90 DAYS" and (2) strike "DURING THE 90 DAY PERIOD"

We urge a favorable report on HB1007.