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**Testimony for the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs  
Committee  
February 15, 2018**

**SB 591 Elections - Absentee Ballot Application - Required Information**

**UNFAVORABLE**

The ACLU of Maryland opposes SB 591, which would expand the ID requirements for persons voting by absentee ballot.

This bill is unnecessary and will depress voter turnout in poor communities and communities of color. There are numerous legitimate problems with elections in the United States—voter intimidation, vote suppression, misinformation, inaccurate registration lists, and voting technology that either does not work consistently or is mistrusted by voters are among them. However, voter fraud is not.

For more than 200 years, America has conducted elections without requiring voters to present ID on Election Day. The only time in our history in which there was a requirement for voters to possess paperwork was when some states required production of a poll tax receipt in order to vote. Unfortunately, we are seeing a modern-day resurgence in this practice, which chills the exercise of voters' constitutional rights. Proponents contend the intent is to prevent vote fraud. When the evidence fails to support that argument, they contend that identifications are necessary because voters do not trust the election system. Neither of these arguments is borne out by the evidence.

For these reasons, the ACLU of Maryland urges an unfavorable report on SB 591.

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