



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(301) 952-3700
County Council

POSITION STATEMENT

HB 710
Delegate Wilkins

Election Law – Incarcerated Individuals – Voter
Hotline and Voting Eligibility (Voting Rights for All
Act)

POSITION:

SUPPORT

HB 710 – Election Law – Incarcerated Individuals – Voter Hotline and Voting Eligibility (Voting Rights for All Act) – For the purpose of requiring the State Board of Elections to provide a certain voter hotline for incarcerated individuals; altering the circumstances under which an individual is not qualified to be a registered voter for the purpose of allowing individuals convicted of a felony and serving a court-ordered sentence of imprisonment for the conviction to register to vote; and generally relating to a voting hotline and voting eligibility for incarcerated individuals.

We strongly support Maryland HB 710, the Voting Rights for All Act, as this critical legislation seeks to restore the voting rights of incarcerated individuals and provide them with the tools they need to participate in our democracy fully. Under current law, individuals incarcerated for felony convictions are denied their fundamental right to vote. HB 710 would change this by allowing individuals serving prison sentences for felony convictions to register to vote. Additionally, it mandates the establishment of a dedicated voter hotline, ensuring that incarcerated individuals can access the information needed to understand their rights and navigate the voting process.

As a majority-minority County, we recognize that with a diverse and vibrant community like Prince George's County, our residents have been historically and disproportionately disenfranchised, leading to our overrepresentation in the criminal justice system. Restoring voting rights to incarcerated individuals is a necessary step toward addressing these racial inequities. Allowing individuals to vote fosters a sense of responsibility and connection to society, an important factor in the rehabilitation process. HB 710 is a powerful opportunity to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their incarceration status, have an equal say in shaping the laws that affect them.

This bill also aligns with national trends where states like Maine and Vermont have already enacted similar policies. By passing HB 710, Maryland would join these states in reinforcing our democracy and strengthening the principles of justice and equity.

For the foregoing reasons, the Prince George's County Council SUPPORTS HB 710 and respectfully requests the Committee's favorable consideration of its position.

Prepared by: Evans & Associates
On behalf of Prince George's County Council

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