

August 15, 2022

The Honorable Larry Hogan
Governor, State of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Hogan,

Over the past two years, we have seen a tremendous uptick in mail-in ballot requests all across the country. Right here in Maryland, [more than 1.5 million voters](#) used mail ballots to have their voices heard in the 2020 election. Nearly [500,000 voters](#) requested to cast a ballot using this method of voting in the 2022 gubernatorial primary. With COVID-19 and monkeypox cases on the rise, we will see an increase in mail-in voting as many voters understandably won't feel safe casting their ballot in-person in November and will want to choose the safety and convenience of voting by mail.

This past legislative session, Common Cause Maryland prioritized emergency legislation that would have allowed local boards of election to canvass mail-in ballots ahead of Election Day, giving election officials a head start and increasing the likelihood of timely results. Despite your acknowledgement that several provisions of the bill offered positive changes to state law – including the early canvassing of mail-in ballots – the consequence of your eleventh-hour veto of our priority election bill SB 163/HB 862 was the weeks-long delay in certifying results from the July 19 primary. More than 345,000 mail-in ballots could not even begin to be processed until Thursday, July 21. After 18 days labor-intensive days, the canvass in all jurisdictions was finally completed. These delays could and would have been avoided were it not for your unexpected veto.

Common Cause Maryland has always sought to maintain an open line of communication with the Office of the Governor. It is unfortunate that your team did not reach out to express your concerns about this bill during the 90-day session, when changes still could have been considered.

In order to right this wrong and ensure the State and local boards of election ability to conduct a safe, secure, efficient and trusted election this November, **we strongly urge you to issue an Executive Order allowing for the pre-processing of mail-in ballots at least eight days before the start of the Early Voting period. Guidance from the Attorney General has expressly allowed a narrow Executive Order of this kind.**

If no action is taken by your Office, we strongly encourage the State Board of Elections to revisit its [June 28, 2022](#) decision to take no legal action that would have allowed for the early canvassing of mail-in ballots.

Failure to take action will **allow time and space for election deniers to propagate lies and conspiracy theories about our elections.**

We are hopeful that the necessary and decisive action will be taken to ensure that Maryland's elections run smoothly in November. If you have questions or would like to discuss our request, please reach out via email at mdrayton@commoncause.org or by phone at 443.906.0442.

Sincerely,

Morgan Drayton, Policy & Engagement Manager
and the team at Common Cause Maryland

cc: Members, State Board of Elections and Linda H. Lamone, Administrator
Senate President Bill Ferguson
Speaker Adrienne A. Jones
President, MD Association of Election Officials