AVR Expansion - Correctional Facilities

Expand the designated agencies under the Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) program to include the Dept. of Public Safety & Correctional Services (DPSCS)

HB 627

Summary

★ Since going into effect in 2019, the Maryland AVR program has provided eligible citizens the opportunity to securely register to vote or update their registration when interacting with the MVA, local social service agencies, the MD healthcare exchange, and the mobility office of the MD Transit Administration.

★ HB 627 would designate the DPSCS an agency covered by the AVR program. Like the agencies that are currently part of the program, DPSCS has the sufficient information necessary to register voters.

★ As eligible citizens are released from correctional facilities, they would - through an electronic process established by the State Board of Elections - be asked whether they want to register to vote. If the voter chooses to register, their completed application would be sent to the appropriate local board of election and voter will be mailed a voter card.

Progress Made

In 2015, the Maryland General Assembly restored the right to vote for over 40,000 citizens on probation or parole. In 2021, the passage of the Value My Vote Act ensured returning citizens were provided with paper voter registration forms upon release. While a great start, we should ensure the process to register is seamless for all eligible voters.

EXPAND THE BALLOT EXPAND THE VOTE
Do you have a felony? Are you on probation or parole?
Are you on pretrial detention?
YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO VOTE!
YOU CAN REGISTER AND VOTE DURING EARLY VOTING

Why right now?

Most returning citizens are unaware their right to vote has been restored. Expanding the AVR agencies to include DPSCS would ensure they are notified and provided the opportunity to register upon release, re-enfranchising thousands of voters with previous felony sentences and voters on the inside.

Maryland would be the second state to make this expansion (Michigan passed a similar bill in 2023). HB 627 will empower ALL Maryland voters — not punish them for their past. Now is the time to affirm returning citizens right to participate in our democratic process.