



LARRY HOGAN  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MARYLAND  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

April 8, 2021

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones  
Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates  
H-101 State House  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Bill Ferguson  
President of the Maryland Senate  
H-107 State House  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Madam Speaker and Mr. President:

Free and fair elections are the very foundation of American democracy and the most basic promise that those in power can pledge to citizens. Last year's presidential election was historic in many ways—most notably the record number of ballots successfully cast amid the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Here in Maryland, more than three million residents safely and effectively performed their civic duty, either by voting in person or voting by mail.

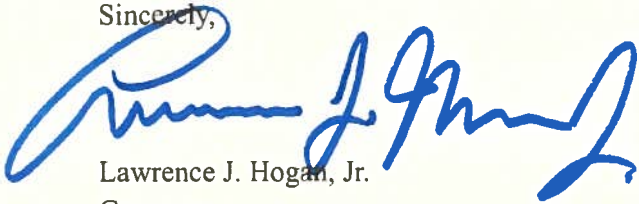
Last August, I directed the State Board of Elections to proceed with in-person voting, come up with a plan for operations, send all eligible voters a form to request a mail-in ballot, and open early voting centers to offer a robust array of voting options to Marylanders. I also directed the Board to make every effort to promote early voting, voting by mail, and voting at off-peak hours, and recruit state employees to serve as election judges. Our approach was one of the most successful in the nation.

*House Bill 745 - Voting - Early Voting Centers; and Senate Bill 683 - Voting - Permanent Absentee Ballot List, Ballot Drop Boxes, and Report* seek to expand the ways we can make elections more accessible to all Marylanders, which is a goal we all share.

Mail-in voting was successful in the 2020 election and should continue into the future. However, *Senate Bill 683 - Voting - Permanent Absentee Ballot List, Ballot Drop Boxes, and Report* creates a bureaucratic morass of mailings that will inevitably result in ballots being incorrectly mailed to ineligible voters. A voter could move, and still be on this list for several years. In short, the benefit of capturing a few more voters is dramatically outweighed by the opportunity for errors and potential for fraud. While I appreciate provisions in the bill trying to scrub ineligible voters from the list and install security cameras at ballot drop boxes, I believe the legislation in its current form may create more problems than it solves.

For these reasons, and in accordance with Article II, Section 17 (c) of the Maryland Constitution, I am allowing *House Bill 745 - Voting - Early Voting Centers and Senate Bill 683 - Voting - Permanent Absentee Ballot List, Ballot Drop Boxes, and Report* to become law without my signature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.  
Governor