



## Senate Bill 960

### *Election Law - Reporting of Precinct Results*

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Education, Health, and Environmental  
Affairs Committee

Date: March 3, 2017

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 960. This bill would mandate that election results provided by local boards of elections, acting in their capacity as boards of canvassers, and the State Board of Elections must include results by precinct for early and absentee voting. Counties are concerned this legislation places a substantial administrative and cost burden onto local Boards of Elections, whose operations are supported by county funding. Without state resources to offset these potentially large costs, the bill represents an unfunded mandate on local governments.

Under current election procedures, local boards of elections tabulate Election Day results by precinct. Election Day votes are tabulated on a specific machine or machines in the polling place for each precinct on the day the ballot is cast. However, votes cast during early voting or by absentee ballot are not tabulated by precinct. Early votes and absentee ballots from all precincts in a county are tabulated together, without being separated out by precinct. Because early voting polling places are open to voters of several precincts, and absentee ballots are mailed in, by-precinct sorting and tabulation would result in an increased need for election staff time and resources.

As a rule, MACo resists state policies that result in costly or burdensome local implementation. This bill would result in substantial costs to local Boards of Elections, which are charged with providing ballots, election judges, and administrative staff at each voting precinct. Local Boards of Elections indicate significant costs associated with generating new types of ballots and hiring additional election judges.

Under state law, counties have no choice but to fund these costs – competing for limited local funds against education, public safety, roadway maintenance, and other essential public services.

This bill would place a costly mandate on county governments to carry out new state policy. Accordingly, without funds and possible technical assistance to suitably implement the bill's requirements, MACo urges the Committee to issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report on SB 960.