



January 15, 2020

Maryland State Board of Elections
151 West St. No. 200
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Cogan and Members of the Board:

We are writing this joint letter to ask the Maryland State Board of Elections (Board) to stop the implementation of wireless electronic pollbook networking on the Primary and General Election Days in the 2020 Presidential Election. **We believe that this implementation is unnecessary and potentially vulnerable to cybersecurity attacks, and we do not think that it is an appropriate use of County funds. We do not support funding this project.**

The Board's staff have stated that the wireless network is needed to speed up data processing. However, Montgomery County Election Director Margaret Jurgensen has testified that "the Montgomery County Board of Elections generally does not have an issue getting its data from the pollbooks uploaded by the 3 a.m. deadline." We expect this to be true for the 2020 Presidential Election cycle and believe that the risks and costs of implementing wireless pollbooks may far outweigh any presumed benefit. We share the perspective of the Montgomery County Board of Elections that same-day registration can be implemented using our existing systems via provisional ballots; this is a process that is known to our election workers and we would expect it to generally work well as a mechanism to implement same-day registration. While we realize that no votes will be transmitted using the proposed wireless electronic pollbook system and the paper back-up pollbooks are in place, we are concerned about the possible disclosure of voters' personal identifying information and the likely return of long lines at the polls if the system fails and back-up measures need to be used.

Wireless networks are generally less secure than wired networks because the communication signals are transmitted through the air and can be intercepted. Site security largely depends on the skill of those setting up and monitoring the wireless system. Beyond the hardware costs, having skilled technicians to correctly set up and support wireless networks at 11 or 12 early voting sites is much easier, and significantly less costly, than providing skilled technicians for each of Montgomery County's 258 precincts on Election Day. Any vulnerabilities in this network could pose a threat to the integrity of election data.

Lastly, hardware costs have been estimated to be \$1,400 per precinct, with a minimum of \$365,000 needed for Montgomery County alone. These costs do not include the extra technicians and poll workers that must be hired to deploy and support this system. Mandating that the six largest county governments fund this initiative with local dollars would also set an extremely worrisome precedent.

Voting is our precious and hard-won right and responsibility as Americans. We hope the Board will listen to our request and stop the mandatory implementation of wireless electronic pollbook networking.

Sincerely,

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Sidney Katz
Council President

Tom Hucker
Council Vice President