



# Frederick County Board of Elections

340A Montevue Lane, Frederick, Maryland 21702  
FrederickCountyMD.gov/elections

301-600-VOTE (8683)  
ElectionBoard@FrederickCountyMD.gov



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Stuart Harvey 301-600-1007

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS DECRIES COUNTY EFFORTS TO DECREASE ELECTION SECURITY

At its meeting on July 3, 2019, the Frederick County Board of Elections discussed with staff the County Executive's proposal to move the County's Liquor Control Board to a space currently utilized by the Board of Elections office at 340A Montevue Lane, Frederick, Maryland.

The Board of Elections is unanimously opposed to the idea, as it believes that moving the County's Liquor Board within the same confines of the election office seriously jeopardizes election security and the Board's ability to conduct elections in the county.

Each of the Board members was appointed by the Governor to ensure fairness, transparent elections, and trust in the integrity of the election process. Maryland's Election Law Article's Statement of Purpose specifically states in part:

"The intention of this article is that the conduct of elections should inspire public confidence and trust by assuring that: ... (6) security and integrity are maintained in all aspects of the election process."

The Department of Homeland Security has designated the Board of Elections as critical infrastructure, *including storage facilities for elections* (emphasis added.) On June 18, 2019, Governor Hogan issued an Executive Order creating The Maryland Cyber Defense Initiative, stating that, "The State stores and processes a large volume of sensitive data and has a responsibility to its citizens and other data owners to protect the confidentiality, availability, and integrity of this data...." The County's Liquor Board would be placed next to the secure room where the Board secures its absentee ballots during elections. The Board believes this is an unacceptable risk, and poses a threat to critical election chain of custody of the ballots.

The space recommended for the County's Liquor Board currently stores its election-related supplies and polling place bags for the 4 Early Voting locations and 63 polling places. Additional equipment that the Board is required to obtain for upcoming same-day registration at our Election Day polling places will need to be stored in this area, since the Board's warehouse is currently full.

At election time, this space is where all supplies are packed by the staff in bags for the Early Voting locations and polling places. It is also where the same bags are brought post-election and all supplies and election materials unloaded, as well as provisional ballots from the polling places. The Board often needs to examine documents from these bags during the post-election canvass, to answer questions that may arise about something that occurred with a voter at a polling place.

The same space is also used to train election judges hired to fill last-minute vacancies at the polls. In the November 2018 general election, those judges were trained that Saturday in 4 different locations: the Board's training room, conference room, the storage area, and across the street in the Bourne Building training room. Losing that space could jeopardize the proper preparation of many judges for Election Day.

Mary Lou Green, Board President, stated, "Having the County's Liquor Board occupying this space will not inspire that public confidence and trust and will compromise the security and integrity of the election process. The public needs to be assured that the elections in Frederick County are secure. Therefore, we ask that the County Executive reconsider this decision to reduce both the security and critical workspace for the election office."