

*American Council of the Blind of Maryland
Legislative Committee
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January 28, 2005

Senator Paula Hollinger, Chair
Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401 - 1991

Re: Written Testimony—SB 63 Election Law-Voting Systems-Independent Verification of Accuracy

Dear Senator Hollinger:

We are writing you on behalf of the American Council of the Blind of Maryland to voice our opposition to SB 63, as it allows the State Board of Elections undue discretion in accommodating blind and visually impaired voters. The American Council of the Blind of Maryland is a state affiliate of the American Council of the Blind, which is the nation's leading advocacy organization for blind and visually impaired people.

The American Council of the Blind of Maryland supports improvements to the election process that promote voter confidence in the integrity of the system. As a voter verifiable paper audit trail would increase voter confidence, the American Council of the Blind of Maryland supports its adoption provided it is made accessible to voters who are blind, visually impaired, or otherwise disabled.

There is presently a bill before the House Ways and Means Committee, which our organization supports. HB 107 would require that voting systems produce an accessible voter verifiable paper audit trail. As the House bill addresses our accessibility concerns, we urge that the Committee take no action on SB 63 and instead await passage by the House of HB 107.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer this testimony and we trust that it will aid the Committee in its deliberations.

Very truly yours,
Robert A. Kerr, Chairman
ACBM Legislative Committee

cc: Albert J. Pietrolungo, President
American Council of the Blind of Maryland