



## **Testimony HB 1112 Ballot Petition Modernization Act Ways and Means March 7, 2023**

Greetings, Madame Chair Atterbeary and Committee. I am Samuel Jordan, President of the Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition (BTEC).

BTEC urges the Committee to issue a favorable report for HB 1112.

On August 1, 2022, BTEC submitted 14,943 signatures to the Baltimore City Board of Elections (the Board). On August 15, the Board notified BTEC that only 9,678 signatures were acceptable, 322 signatures short of the 10,000 valid signature threshold.

On August 17, BTEC requested, and the Board consented to a review of the Board's Determination. We sought to exercise the constitutional right to challenge, review, and redress, if needed, the actions of a governmental agency.

On or about August 19, the Board rescinded BTEC's opportunity to review the Determination stating that such a review was a "waste of time because the Board's staff did a good job."

After a BTEC protest, the Board made the petition available although only one-and-a-half days remained in the ten-day period to obtain judicial review following receipt of the Determination.

Unable to complete the review, BTEC filed an action against the Board in the Baltimore Circuit Court. Despite finding the Board's behavior "disturbing," the Court ordered a Summary Judgment and closure of the BTEC complaint. BTEC continues to seek a balanced and fair judicial review.

BTEC urges the Committee to report favorably on HB 1112 to protect the constitutional right to review, challenge, and correct actions of a governmental agency. HB 1112 helps to prevent an unlawful suspension of the exercise of the right to vote, the foundation of a democracy. With a favorable report, BTEC also urges the Committee to support the availability of electronic petitioning in order that duly registered voters may gain ballot access without purposeless inconvenience and undue regulatory prohibition. Thank you.