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From the Desk of Jared DeMarinis, State Administrator of Elections:

The State Board of Elections is committed to its mission of openness and transparency while ensuring that the election is secure. We focus only on providing voters with factual information. The facts are:

1. Mail-in voting is a legal, secure, and transparent voting method.
2. SBE has safeguards to ensure one vote is counted.
3. Mail-in voting is not a partisan issue. Whether in the primary, as in this case, or the general election, voting methods are not partisan.

As with the end of every election, SBE will conduct an internal lesson learned review of the entire process. Processes will be refined, improved and enhanced after that occurs. Of course, the review will include an in-depth analysis of the printing, packing and inserting of the mail-in ballot process.

With the first day of June, we begin our final push toward Primary Day.

Canvass:

Today is the first day that a local board may commence the canvassing process. The canvass is open to the public for observation. It is conducted under the direction of a bipartisan Board of Canvassers. Only in-person received mail-in ballots, replacement mail-in ballots and Print at Home ballots will be canvassed. At this time, if the local board of elections has one of the original mail-in ballots in its possession, that mail-in ballot will be quarantined and not part of any pre-election day canvass. Once a ballot is canvassed, the voter's record in the statewide voter registration database will be updated and notice will be sent to the voter, if the voter has requested text or email updates about the status of their ballot. A voter may check on the status of their replacement ballot on our website at <https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/VoterSearch>.

The State Board of Elections will be considering specific canvassing instructions for instances where an individual voter only returns the original ballot and no other ballot at their June 9 meeting.

Security features:

SBE has initiated additional ballot and return ballot envelope security features to distinguish the replacement ballot from the original ballots. The local boards have been notified and can easily separate replacement ballots from the original ballots for the canvass.

Each mail-in ballot has a unique tracking bar code to distinguish the original from the replacement.

Only one vote will be counted:

Prior to presenting a ballot for canvassing, the LBE reviews (1) the ballot envelope to ensure compliance with any legal requirements and (2) that the individual does not already have voting credit. If the individual has a voting credit, then the second ballot will not be canvassed.

Quarantined mail-in ballots in the possession of the LBE that met the legal deadline for canvassing will have further guidelines released following the June 9 State Board Meeting.

Curing:

If a replacement ballot envelope is missing a signature for the oath, the LBE will notify the voter of the deficiency and how to cure it before 10 a.m. on July 6, the final day of canvass.

Vote the Replacement Ballot:

To reiterate, all affected mail-in voters, even those who have returned ballots already, should vote the replacement ballot. As stated before, if the voter still has their original mail-in ballot in their possession, do not vote that one. Vote the clearly identified replacement ballot.

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