



House Bill 145

Election Law – Election Misinformation, Election Disinformation, and Deepfakes

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Government, Labor, and Elections
Committee

Date: February 4, 2026

From: Kevin Kinnally and Charlotte Fleckenstein

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 145. This bill strengthens Maryland’s election laws by prohibiting deepfakes and other forms of synthetic media intended to interfere with voting, and equipping the State to respond swiftly to election misinformation.

In recent years, the rise of “deepfakes” — manipulated videos, images, and audio generated through artificial intelligence—have threatened voter confidence and the integrity of democratic elections. As a result, local election officials face heightened pressure, misinformation-driven confusion, and, increasingly, threats and harassment tied to false election narratives.

Counties play a critical role in administering elections, and local boards of elections bear the direct operational and security consequences when false information spreads unchecked.

With a strict focus on materially false information intended to impede the voting process, HB 145 does not regulate general political speech or public opinion. It helps protect voters from misinformation designed to manipulate electoral outcomes and works to maintain public trust in Maryland’s elections.

Safe and secure elections are a core function of local government. By modernizing policy to address the digital realities of 2026, this bill safeguards the trust Marylanders place in their local electoral systems.

This legislation provides a balanced, statewide framework that supports local election administration efforts. By giving the State clear authority to respond quickly and to correct misinformation at its source, this bill helps protect election workers, preserve public trust, and support the county officials responsible for carrying out elections.

HB 145 provides necessary and timely policy changes that balance the shared goals of providing fair, open, and transparent elections. Accordingly, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 145.