



City of Annapolis

Office of the City Clerk c/o Board of Supervisors of Elections

160 Duke of Gloucester Street, 1st FL

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July 22, 2020

To: Annapolis City Council
From: Eileen Leahy, Chair
Board of Supervisors of Election

Re: **City Council Referral of CA-2-20**

The Annapolis Board of Supervisors of Elections (Board) was asked to comment on the proposed Charter Amendment C-2-20.

This statement is a summary of the Board's discussion concerning how this proposed change could affect the City's 2021 Primary and General Elections, currently scheduled to be conducted September 21, 2021 and November 2, 2021 respectively. The proposed change would move the Primary Election up by two-and-a-half months to July 13, 2021.

Per City Code, the Board's charge is to conduct safe, secure, and accessible elections for Annapolis voters and to ensure voters' right to vote. Preparing for the City's two elections that occur every four years is an ongoing process, but one whose planning activities accelerate 12-16 months before the elections and officially kicks off with the start of the election calendar. For the 2021 Elections, the calendar is set to begin on August 3, 2020 and all election activities, such as voter registration, candidacy requirements, and recruitment of election judges, are tied to this timeline.

If CA-2-20 is passed, its enactment will likely take place in late November or early December. This will cause a revision of the Election Calendar that moves the Primary Election date up by two-and-a-half months to July 13, 2021. Several aspects of the election cycle, which will be affected, are timelines and deadlines for voter registration, absentee ballot requests, candidate filing, and campaign fund reporting. In addition, multiple notifications of the changes to constituents and voters will be required.

Another consideration is the potential effect on voter turnout and recruitment of election judges. Changing the date of the Primary Election may have a negative effect on them since many individuals, families go on vacation in July, and the weather locally can be very hot and humid.

The Board also looked at the fiscal impact of the proposed charter amendment change and found the following:

- Additional costs associated with communications to constituents and voters about the date change, such as printing, mailing, and signage, will be expected.



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- Pre-election costs associated with the Primary Election, such as ballot printing, mailings, election and recruitment materials, along with staffing will move from the FY22 budget to the current FY21 budget.
- Costs associated with the General Election are not expected to be affected by CA 2-20 and the Board anticipates they will be in the FY22 budget and not be affected by CA 2-20.

Two factors not directly impacted by a primary election date change, but ones which could compete for resources are COVID-19 and vote by mail. I hope that by spring 2021 the pandemic will have abated due to treatment and prevention options; however, if still a factor, it will need to be addressed and further changes made. Vote by mail is an option the Board was looking at prior to the pandemic and is under discussion for the 2021 Annapolis elections. Adjustments to the election calendar and shortened planning time due to CA 2-20 could make this option less likely for 2021.

Due to the many changes described, especially the potential effects on voters, multiple adjustments to the Election Calendar, and the fiscal impact on the FY21 budget, the Annapolis Board of Supervisors of Elections does not support changing the date of the 2021 Primary Election as proposed by Charter Amendment 2-20.

In addition, the Board respectfully asks the City Council members to hold off on charter changes proposals affecting elections until after the 2021 Elections are held and more due diligence and evaluation can be done in a timely manner.

Thank you.

Eileen Leahy, Chair

Briayna Cuffie, Member

Cliff Myers, Member