



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HB 333 Election Law - Election Disinformation on Large Social Media Platforms and Influence Related to Voting

POSITION – Support

BY: Linda Kohn, President

DATE: February 6, 2024

The League of Women Voters has a long-standing position that a democratic government depends on informed and active participation of voters. Disinformation interferes with the ability of voters to participate and make informed choices when casting their ballot.

According to Pew Research Center, in 2023, about 50% of people always or sometimes got their news information from social media.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/fact-sheet/social-media-and-news-fact-sheet/>

Already, rumors about the 2024 election are showing up on social media, such as false information that the 2024 election may be canceled.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2024/01/23/no-reports-about-canceling-2024-election-contrary-to-post-post-wrongly-says-conversation-about-cance/72271988007/>

We therefore support HB 333, which would help ensure that “large social media platforms make reasonable efforts to prevent, detect and remove accounts and posts that communicate disinformation” in Maryland. We have seen ample evidence of the growing problem of election disinformation in our state over the years and are concerned how unregulated social media accelerates the problem, including in the upcoming general election season this year.

We are particularly concerned about reports that some of the existing large social media platforms have reduced the resources they devote to monitoring and guarding against election disinformation and of legal efforts by some other states to deter efforts to stop such disinformation. The state of Maryland would benefit from stronger legal support in this area.



For these reasons, the League of Women Voters fully agrees that Maryland legislation should cover all aspects and sources of election disinformation, and the State Board of Elections and the Maryland Comptroller should be empowered to fully investigate and enforce against any violations.

We urge a favorable report on HB 333.