

emphasize that the only way to detect security breaches of a touch screen device is through a voter verified paper audit trail. Throughout the past year, the General Assembly and this Administration were under the assumption that Maryland could acquire voter verified paper audit trail equipment in time for the 2006 primary election. It was not until the first week of February, that we learned from the State Administrator that our equipment could not be retrofitted in time for the 2006 elections.

At that time, the General Assembly should have focused its full efforts on ensuring that Marylanders had a secure voting system. I supported the House of Delegates plan (House Bill 244) to implement an optical scan system with a paper ballot for the 2006 elections. In fact, I also fully funded that proposal in my Supplemental Budgets. At the least, the General Assembly should have required additional testing of the Diebold AccuVote-TS voting system to evaluate the new risk vulnerabilities caused by early voting and to address the serious security concerns raised by the California Secretary of State. Regrettably, the Senate has failed to recognize the critical status of these issues and rejected the appropriate legislation needed to secure Maryland's voting system this fall.

The entire state has been watching the General Assembly as it has altered the traditional election process in Maryland. Dramatic changes to control the election administration processes have raised suspicions and concerns from every corner of the state. Just this week, a Washington Post editorial described the actions of the General Assembly by stating "Over the past two years they have sought to leverage their statewide numerical advantage by enacting a set of relatively permissive elections laws under the aegis of what the party has called a 'voters' bill of rights.' . . . With such arrogance and abuse, the Democrats will only erode their majority in Maryland." This view is shared by many including the Executive Director of the nonpartisan group devoted to integrity in elections, Linda Schade of True Vote Maryland, who was quoted in yesterday's Washington Times: "I have to say, the Democrats are just engaged in an abuse of power that is going to contribute to a sense of mayhem in the fall elections."

For the above stated reasons, I have vetoed House Bill 1368.

Very truly yours,  
Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.  
Governor

### **House Bill No. 1368**

AN ACT concerning

### **Election Law - Voter Bill of Rights**

FOR the purpose of requiring a local board of elections to establish, under certain circumstances, a separate precinct to serve certain institutions of higher education; requiring each institution at which a precinct is established to provide certain facilities and services to the local board; requiring that local boards, when establishing early voting polling places, select sites that are