

theory is that the Governor appoints a "blue-ribbon commission" board that hires a professional manager who serves as the executive director of the State's election machinery. The requirement of a super-majority vote insures that any removal of a State Administrator occurs with bipartisan support. Senate Bill 444 injects politics into this process by requiring Senate advice and consent over the Board's selection of the State Administrator. This provision of the bill pierces the veil of insulation from political pressures that exists in the current statute.

In a similar vein, the provision that requires five members of the State Board to be fully confirmed opens the process to political machinations that are not in the best interests of Maryland's election process. If the State Administrator has lost the confidence of four of the five members of the State Board, a removal action should not be held hostage by the fifth member suddenly resigning or by the failure of the Senate to confirm a fifth member because it is no longer in session. Nor should the State Administrator be authorized to continue to serve in office after having lost the confidence of four of the five members of the State Board. That provision of the bill is ludicrous and would be totally counterproductive to the administration of Maryland's election laws.

The current statute governing the State Board and the State Administrator has adequate safeguards to protect the rights of the minority party and to insulate the election process from undue political influences. The provisions of Senate Bill 444 contradict the "good government" accomplishments incorporated in the election code over the past decade by the General Assembly.

For the above-stated reasons, I have vetoed Senate Bill 444.

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

Senate Bill No. 444

AN ACT concerning

**Elections - State ~~Elections Office and State Elections Advisory Committee~~
Board of Elections - Membership Appointment Process and Authority over
the State Administrator**

FOR the purpose of ~~establishing a State Elections Office and State Elections Advisory Committee to provide guidance and recommendations to the State Administrator of Elections on certain election matters; providing for the membership, appointment, powers, and duties of the Committee; establishing a State Administrator Appointment and Removal Commission; specifying the membership, powers, and duties of the Commission; altering the process for the appointment and removal of the State Administrator; altering the powers and duties of the State Administrator; abolishing the State Board of Elections; making this Act an emergency measure; and generally relating to the establishment of the State Elections Advisory Committee and the governance of State elections~~ altering the appointment process for the members of the State