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P.O. BOX 6486, ANNAPOLIS, MD 21401-0486 PHONE (410) 269-2840

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**IMPORTANT ELECTION INFORMATION FOR THE 2008
PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY ELECTION**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Nikki Baines Trella - 410.269.2843
Donna Duncan - 410.269.2851

Annapolis, Maryland (January 18, 2008) – The 2008 Presidential Primary Election will be held on Tuesday, February 12, 2008. Polling places across Maryland will be open for voting from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Voters in line at 8:00 p.m. will be permitted to vote.

Who Can Vote?

Generally, only registered voters affiliated with either the Democratic or Republican Party can vote for a candidate for President and other partisan contests in the upcoming Presidential Primary Election. Registered voters who are affiliated with another political party or those voters who are not affiliated with any political party may only vote for non-partisan contests, such as school board and municipal contests and ballot questions. The following counties have non-partisan contests on the 2008 Presidential Primary Election ballot: Allegany (City of Cumberland only), Calvert, Carroll, Cecil, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery, Queen Anne's, Talbot (school board districts 2 and 6 only), and Washington Counties.

Seventeen year olds who will be 18 years old on or before the Presidential General Election (November 4, 2008) **and** who are affiliated with either the Democratic or Republican Party may vote for partisan contests in the upcoming Presidential Primary Election. Additional information about voting rights of 17 year olds is available at www.elections.state.md.us.

Where Do I Vote?

Voters should vote in the precinct to which they are assigned. A voter can find his or her assigned precinct by looking at the voter notification card he or she received from the local board of elections or by visiting www.elections.state.md.us and using the polling place locator (click "Where is your polling place?" on the right side of the homepage). If a voter has moved and did not update his or her address with the local board, the voter should contact the local board of election to find out his or her assigned precinct for the new address. The voter should vote in the precinct for his or her new address, as voting in the wrong precinct may result in the voter's provisional ballot not being counted.

How Do I Vote?

All voters in Maryland use the same voting system. For polling place voting, voters use a touchscreen voting system. Instructions are available at polling places for voters to familiarize themselves with the ballot and how to vote. In addition, voters may log on to www.elections.state.md.us (click "Voting System" in the left column) for an online demonstration of a touchscreen voting system. Voters may also ask an election judge to explain how to vote on the voting system, but a voter must vote alone, unless a voter is unable to do so because of disability, inability to write, or inability to read the ballot.

For absentee and provisional voting, voters use a paper-based optical scan voting system. With this system, voters are issued a paper ballot and fill in the oval next to the candidate or ballot question response for which he or she wants to vote. At the local board of elections, the ballot is fed into a scanning unit, which reads and tabulates the selections made by voters. **All** provisional ballots and absentee ballots are considered in a public meeting after the election and counted or rejected according to State law and regulation.

How Can I Get an Absentee Ballot?

The deadline to request an absentee ballot by mail or by fax is Tuesday, February 5, 2007. Starting Wednesday, February 6th through election day, voters must request an absentee ballot *in person* at a local board of elections. The absentee ballot application is available at www.elections.state.md.us under “Absentee Voting” in the left column.

Voted absentee ballots may be delivered to the local board of elections by 8:00 p.m. on election day **or** mailed on or before election day and received by the local board by Friday, February 22, 2007. **All** absentee ballots are reviewed, regardless of whether or not the absentee ballots will make a difference in the outcome of an election.

What is a Provisional Ballot?

A provisional ballot is a safeguard to ensure that an individual who believes that he or she is registered and eligible to vote is able to vote. If a voter is required to vote by provisional ballot, the voter will be asked to complete a provisional ballot application and vote a paper-based optical scan ballot. It is important that the voter complete the entire provisional ballot application, as the information on the application is used to determine whether the provisional ballot will be counted.

All provisional ballot applications are reviewed, regardless of whether or not the provisional ballots will make a difference in the outcome of an election. A provisional ballot will only be counted after the local board of elections has reviewed the provisional ballot application and determined that the individual is in fact registered and eligible to vote. A provisional ballot is not an alternative to the electronic voting system. Additional information about provisional voting is available at www.elections.state.md.us under “Voting.”

Additional election-related dates and information are available at www.elections.state.md.us under “Elections” and “2008 Presidential Elections.” For more information, voters may contact the local boards of elections or the State Board of Elections at 1-800-222-VOTE (8683).

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