



**Montgomery County
Board of Elections**

November 19, 2023

DRAFT Staff Proposal: Board of Elections' policy for utilizing Social Media Platforms

The Montgomery County Board of Elections has sustained a vibrant presence on social media platforms for over a decade. However, BOE's engagement on social media platforms needs an official policy that would provide guidance regarding the BOE's procedures for use of social media.

Since the early onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, social media has become an integral and increasing part of voter engagement. BOE's efforts resulted in:

- X (formerly known as Twitter) account that indicates the BOE is followed by 2,745 individual accounts while it follows 2,131 individual accounts.
- Facebook account indicates that the BOE is followed by 3,800+ individuals while it follows 507 individual accounts.
- Instagram account indicates that the BOE is followed by 372 individual accounts while it follows 148 individual accounts.

The above overview of different accounts indicates that BOE is following significantly more accounts than the other local boards (highest number is 753), or Montgomery County Government (628) and the Maryland State Board of Elections (229).

There is also an inherent problem with the BOE following any accounts. The BOE is a non-partisan organization. Following some accounts while not following other accounts may lead to the

perception that the BOE favors certain individuals who ultimately may be a candidate on the ballot.

Recognizing the significant role social media has, BOE aims to:

- ✓ sustain robust election information dissemination efforts via Facebook, Instagram, and X;
- ✓ strategically position itself as the trusted source for election related information; and
- ✓ maintain neutrality and continue to promote non-partisan engagement.

The Staff proposes the following policy approach for the Board to consider:

- a) Unfollowing all current accounts across all social media platforms,
- b) Not following any account across social media platforms in the future while
- c) Encouraging the public to follow BOE on noted platforms by providing all options available for any account on any social media platform to follow and engage the Montgomery County Board of Elections.

Respectfully submitted,

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Election Director
