



Connect 24



Special Candidate Forum Edition

Volume 2 Issue 1

March, 2018

MAEO 2018 Election

Dates to Remember:

March 2, 2018—Deadline to request an absentee ballot

March 13-16, 2018—Annual Conference

March 15, 2018—MAEO Election Day



Inside This Issue

David Garreis.....	2-3
Gail Hatfield.....	4-5
Alisha Alexander.....	6
Ruie Marie Lavoie.....	7
Danna E. Archie Williams	8
Mary-Frances Alcoser.....	9
Ben Frey.....	9-10
Abigail Goldman	11
Barry Jackson.....	12
Armstead Jones.....	12-13
Jayne Lister.....	13
Kimberly Phillips.....	14
Joshua Ramos.....	14-15
March Welch.....	15-16
Gilberto Zelaya.....	16-17

Candidate Forum

We asked each candidate the same set of questions regarding their plans for MAEO. Here's what they had to say!!

We would like to thank all the candidates for their responses.

Sincerely,

Jessica Noranbrock

Craig Booth

Shawn Larson

David Gerreis (Running for President)



County: Anne Arundel County

What made you decide to run for office? If you are an incumbent, what made you decide to run again?

I am currently the President of MAEO and I have decided to run for re-election because MAEO has made many positive strides over the last two years including launching the Connect24 newsletter, holding cost-effective conferences with interesting speakers on topics related to managing elections and professional development, and becoming a forum for the local Boards of Elections to discuss best practices and brainstorm better ways to run elections. MAEO is filled with great people who truly care about the election profession and it would be an honor to continue to serve as President.

How long have you been a MAEO member?

I've been a member of MAEO since 2005. I was first elected to the MAEO Board of Directors in 2010. I was elected President in 2016.

What is your vision and number one priority for MAEO?

My number one priority for MAEO is to finish the Pay Raise and Job Reclassification Project. The single most immediate problem facing the MAEO community is that the opportunities for career advancement are very limited and the pay scale for election professionals is beneath other professional departments in the state system. The staff members at the local Boards deserve better compensation for their work and they deserve the opportunity to advance up the career ladder in elections. We need to create more job classifications between Election Deputy Director and Election Supervisor II or Election Information System Specialist.

Over the past two years, we have worked hard to address this problem. The Personnel Committee has done a great job developing a relationship with the Department of Budget and Management, drafting new position specifications, and building a scalable framework for career advancement that benefits all LBEs, regardless of their size.

I am pleased to report the new position specifications and job classifications are currently under review at the Department of Budget and Management. We are close to implementing an election career path with higher pay and greater opportunities for local Board employees. Finishing this project is my number one priority.

After we are successful, we will work with the LBEs that do not operate within the state personnel system to implement similar positions and job classifications in their personnel systems as well.

David Garreis cont'd

How do you feel you can improve MAEO and make it more relevant?

Over the past two years, we made great strides to improve MAEO and make it more relevant, however, I have many lessons learned about how MAEO is managed I will build on, including increasing the use of Smartsheets to coordinate the activities of the MAEO Committees and MAEO projects.

Since I've been President, we have changed the way we manage the conferences including using Google Sheets and Smartsheets to keep track of conference costs, scheduling, and important deadlines. I will expand on these lessons learned and continue to implement a more project-management based system to manage the MAEO Conferences.

I also want to increase the coordination between the MAEO and SBE so that we're working together to hold the most efficient and easy-to-manage elections in the nation. In this regard, we are working with SBE to hold in 2019 MAEO Conference and Biennial together.

Finally, the current MAEO Board of Directors has repeatedly observed that the MAEO Bylaws are out-of-date, frequently unclear or contradictory, and full of loopholes. I will launch a project to update and revise the MAEO Bylaws by inviting representatives from large, medium, and small LBEs, as well as representatives from every region of Maryland to join the Constitution and Bylaws Committee with the goal of closing loopholes, clarifying language, and making the Bylaws current.

Please name 1 or 2 items you would like to accomplish during your 2-year term.

If re-elected, my highest priority action item is to finish the Pay Raise and Job Reclassification Project. I know from personal experience how hard it is to buy a house and start a family on the income from a career in elections. If managing elections is a profession, then we need to be compensated like other professionals in the state personnel system. We need a career path so talented employees can grow from entry level to Election Director. Successfully finishing this project will be the number one priority of my second term as the President of MAEO.



Gail Hatfield (Running for President)



County: CALVERT

What made you decide to run for office? If you are an incumbent, what made you decide to run again?

It just amazes me to see how much can be accomplished by just working together and utilizing the talents of our members as a whole to reach our goals of excellence for our citizens. Each MAEO member has so many unique talents and when they all come together through our MAEO committees, communication, and legislation along with partnering with the State Board, it seems there is nothing that we cannot accomplish together.

As President, I keep an open door policy. I keep myself available for support to any MAEO member who needs my help. I am always willing to sit down and talk about any issues or problems and together come up with a solution. I want to help improve fellowship and communication.

I am running again because MAEO is my passion and I want to see it become the best organization it can be with the help of all of YOU!

Let's all move forward, together, as one!

How long have you been a MAEO member?

I am proud to have been a MAEO member now for almost 32 years. I have actually been on the MAEO Board since 1999 as a board member and also Past President.

I have served on many committees such as Chair of the Educational committee and Grant committee for 13 years. Former Chair of the Legislative committee, Current Chair of the Auditing committee and served on the Conference Planning committee for many years. I was instrumental in actually bring the CERA "Certified Election Registration Administrator" program to Maryland and have been a CERA graduate for 15 years. I was also the Robert J. Antonetti recipient in 2008.

What is your vision and number one priority for MAEO?

Ever since the first MAEO meeting this organization has existed to fill the needs of election officials across the state to join together to protect and encourage the voting rights of our citizens. We have battled for many necessary changes and have achieved greater uniformity in election practices. It is the great work of the members running this association that have gotten us where we are today.

Gail Hatfield cont'd

With that being said, my vision is to continue to build the communication between MAEO and state. There is so much diversity and talent across this state. My motto will be "Moving Forward, Working Together as ONE"

How do you feel you can improve MAEO and make it more relevant?

By being a positive role model. Provide support where needed. By increasing member participation and communication we can then better our communication with the State Board and begin working together in improving Maryland's election processes.

Please name 1 or 2 items you would like to accomplish during your 2-year term.

My personal goal has been and will remain is to increase member participation and communication between MAEO and the State Board. We are all reaching for the same goal "Excellence and improvement of Maryland's election processes and administration".

Across the state I hear the same thing, we all want to be heard and utilize our talents in making our elections the best ever. This takes work between MAEO and the state board working closely together. In order to make this happen, as President, I need to hear from each committee and understand where you all stand and what you need as a group to make it work. We need to keep the lines of communication open. Let's work together on what is working and what needs to be addressed.



Alisha Alexander (Running for Vice President)



County: Prince George's

What made you decide to run for office? If you are an incumbent, what made you decide to run again?

I served as a MAEO board member for two terms. I decided to run for Vice President so that I could actively support the mission of the president and the board while continuing to be the "voice" for the members who have concerns or challenges but are not comfortable expressing them publicly.

How long have you been a MAEO member?

I've been a member of MAEO for 17 years.

What is your vision and number one priority for MAEO?

I think it is imperative that the elected officers of MAEO collectively establish the vision and priorities of the organization. The MAEO president usually sets the tone and the direction of the organization. Based on my experience, if the leadership of an organization does not have a unified vision or priorities, nothing gets accomplished.

How do you feel you can improve MAEO and make it more relevant?

Since this is a membership based organization, I think that the new board should continue its effort to establish various forums for the members to provide feedback regarding the direction of the organization and/or its committees.

Please name 1 or 2 items you would like to accomplish during your 2-year term.

I'd love to see the MAEO Board work with the personnel committee and SBE to ensure that state employees receive much needed promotions and pay increases.



Ruie Marie Lavoie (Running for Secretary)



County: Baltimore County

What made you decide to run for office? If you are an incumbent, what made you decide to run, again?

MAEO provides many opportunities for us to network and learn from each other. I decided to run again because I believe in MAEO's mission statement and support together with the State Board of Elections towards a common resolve, executing the *best possible elections*.

How long have you been a MAEO member?

Over 6 years

What is your vision and number one priority for MAEO?

To see MAEO's membership grow, involving more election officials from all of our 24 jurisdictions. I want to continue working to see MAEO bridge the gap with SBE, with all of us together, moving in the same positive direction, the end result will be success.

How do you feel you can improve MAEO and make it more relevant?

I would like to see MAEO cultivate its social media footprint. Using tools like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, MAEO will be able to distribute news faster and keep our election family in the know! Also, to create more educational opportunities, training and cross training which will help us in our day to day roles and responsibilities.

Please name 1 or 2 items you would like to accomplish during your 2-year term.

Although cliché, I will work to see MAEO...my election family become the best we can be. To use all the resources available, enabling us to become a "force to be reckoned with", one that works in harmony and unity with each other throughout our entire organization.

I would like to see MAEO have more social activities to afford the opportunity to get to know each other outside of election related activities.



Danna E. Archie Williams (Running for Treasurer)



County: Baltimore County

What made you decide to run for office? If you are an incumbent, what made you decide to run again?

To maintain consistency and continuity on the MAEO board, specifically at the treasurer's position.

How long have you been a MAEO member?

Since 2006...11 years!

What is your vision and number one priority for MAEO?

Greater growth within the membership of MAEO by expanding our base, growing the presence and outreach of MAEO, the organization. My #1 priority is to see MAEO run like a well-oiled machine!

How do you feel you can improve MAEO and make it more relevant?

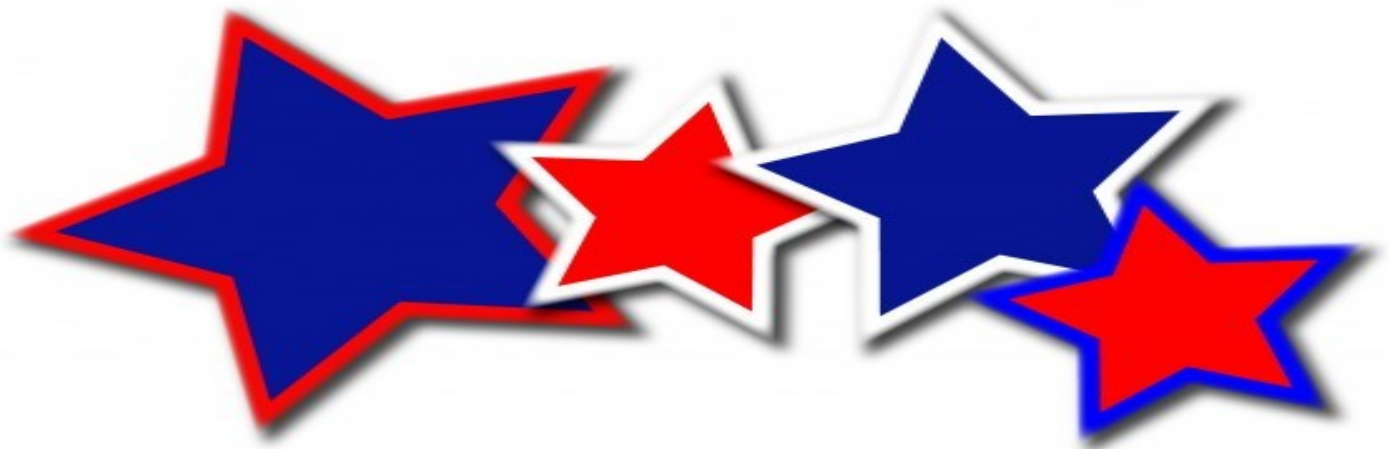
By capitalizing on our ability to network within our member counties and with the multiple resources available to us at SBE, opening greater lines of communication throughout our organization... ever striving together to work *SMARTER NOT HARDER!*

Please name 1 or 2 items you would like to accomplish during your 2-year term.

To foster a greater sense of unity within the membership of MAEO, recognizing that we're all on the same team, sharing the same vision, with the same goal in our sights...hosting the best elections possible!

Achieve greater numbers in MAEO's membership. Encourage more involvement within our existing base of members.

GROWTH!!!



Mary-Frances Alcoser (Running for Board)



County: Baltimore County

What made you decide to run for office? If you are an incumbent, what made you decide to run, again?

I decided to run for office again because I want to contribute more to MAEO. I feel there is so much more that we can do and achieve as one.

How long have you been a MAEO member?

I have been a member of MAEO since 2007.

What is your vision and number one priority for MAEO?

Since MAEO represents our whole state, I would like to see an increase in the membership. I want to hear everyone's voice.

How do you feel you can improve MAEO and make it more relevant?

I feel by having an increase in the membership, MAEO will improve us by leaps and bounds.

Please name 1 or 2 items you would like to accomplish during your 2-year term.

As I have stated before I want to see more people join MAEO. There is so much we can accomplish as one whole body. I want to actively work toward that goal. To back that up, my second goal would be to make sure their voices are heard. I would like to see more 'active' members getting involved with the committees we have in place. The people that work at our LBEs are special. From the largest of counties to the smallest, we all can contribute...for the good of us all. As always we are MAEO Strong!!!

Ben Frey (Running for Board)



County: Somerset

What made you decide to run for office? If you are an incumbent, what made you decide to run again?

The more I participate with MAEO, the more I want to become ever more involved. I was the first chairman of the Election Technology Committee; I founded and manage the MAEO newsletter; I have attended many Board and committee meetings and try to participate whenever possible. Serving on the Board seems to be the next logical step, a challenging and exciting one.

Ben Frey cont'd

How long have you been a MAEO member?

I attended my first MAEO conference in 2012, six months after I became a State employee.

What is your vision and number one priority for MAEO?

MAEO is a voice for every election official in the local offices, as well as SBE's dedicated partner in conducting and improving elections. MAEO is made up of the front-line ground troops. Our experience, our insight, and our 'war stories' must inform and guide all efforts to keep Maryland at the forefront of US elections. We must always maintain a professional, thoughtful and immaculately intelligent voice when fulfilling our roles for SBE and the public.

How do you feel you can improve MAEO and make it more relevant?

I am not a wizard when it comes to election tech, but I'm pretty darn good and well more than adequate. Where I *do* stand out is with communication, brainstorming, sharing of knowledge, and encouraging the ones who *are* exceptional. As MAEO conducts its business, I would lead discussions towards the best ideas, the best individuals for the task at hand, and the best directions for MAEO to take. "Good enough" just isn't good enough. If we have insight into a problem that isn't being fully or adequately addressed, we must speak up, forcefully if necessary. We are relevant, and critical, to the success of the mission. We must continue to *earn* the honor of being relevant and critical.

Please name 1 or 2 items you would like to accomplish during your 2-year term.

Six years ago, I introduced and implemented something called the Election Technology Users Group, a discussion group for all Maryland election tech folk, hosted on Yammer.com. The purpose of the ETUG was to allow a question to be posted or a discussion started that all members would see, that anybody could respond to, and that everyone could follow. I felt it was a very efficient way to share information and knowledge, without having to rely on copying or forwarding or 'replying all'. It was quite active, productive, and useful for a time. ETUG lasted about a year and half and was eventually discontinued because of security and proprietary information concerns. I would very much like to start from scratch, do the research, see what's available nowadays, and try to implement this again.

There are dozens of associations similar to MAEO around the country, associations of election officials, county clerks, or registrars. Many states also have county associations, where elections are one of many priorities. Some of these associations are quite active, some less so. Some are more successful, some less so. Some agendas are quite similar to MAEO's, some are quite different. I have already compiled a list of many of these organizations. I believe there are genuine opportunities for sharing, learning, and achieving results with these peer associations.

Abigail Goldman (Running for Board)



County: Baltimore City

What made you decide to run for office? If you are an incumbent, what made you decide to run, again?

I have previously served on the MAEO Board as a Board Member for three terms. I was elected in 2010 and served on the Board until 2016 when I decided not to run for that term due to health reasons. I always said that it was just a hiatus and that I planned to run in 2018. Now I am back and stronger than ever and look forward to picking up where I left off!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

How long have you been a MAEO member?

I have been a member of MAEO for over 25 years or so.

What is your vision and number one priority for MAEO?

My priority and vision for MAEO is and always will be to improve the election process and registration procedures. I have been doing this while serving on various MAEO and SBE committees.

I served on the following committees:

- **The committee to establish the requirements and criteria for the RFP for MDVOTERS.**
- **Served on many and continue to serve on the JAD sessions to update MDVOTERS and has conducted user testing for the system.**
- **The Executive Committee for MDVOTERS.**
- **Served on the Entertainment Committee for the Convention for the 6 years while on the Board**
- **Serve several years including this year on the Election Judge Manual Committee which included the revamping the Election Judge Manual and Early Voting Manual, updating forms used on Election Day and Early Voting.**
- **Preparation of the curriculum preparation of the EPPD in conjunction with the State Board of Elections.**
- **Currently serves on the MAEO's Election Judge Committee and The Early Voting Committee.**

How do you feel you can improve MAEO and make it more relevant?

To continue to serve on the committees to guide Election Laws and Registration and implementation of laws that are passed.



Barry Jackson (Running for Board)



County: Washington

What made you decide to run for office? If you are an incumbent, what made you decide to run, again?

I have been a regular attendee of MAEO meetings, active in a number of MAEO committees, and after consulting with a number of members, decided to run for board member.

How long have you been a MAEO member?

Since September, 2016.

What is your vision and number one priority for MAEO?

To help MAEO drive election-related legislation in Annapolis.

How do you feel you can improve MAEO and make it more relevant?

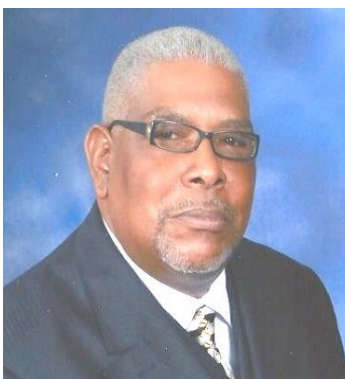
I believe MAEO is an outstanding organization full of outstanding people, and I'm proud to be a part of it. I don't believe my role would be to improve it, but rather to help it continue to move forward. I believe my value to the board is that since I'm a relative newcomer to the election community, I don't know how things "have always been done before." I will bring a different perspective to the MAEO board.

Please name 1 or 2 items you would like to accomplish during your 2-year term.

Create a "Best Practices" group that all MAEO members can contribute to, whether it be a chat board on MAEO's website or a regular section in the Connect24 newsletter.

Continue to contribute to the Connect24 newsletter and help it to become even more relevant, informative and entertaining for MAEO members.

Armstead Jones (Running for Board)



County: Baltimore City

What made you decide to run for office? If you are an incumbent, what made you decide to run, again?

I would genuinely make a difference in the association because of my experience and dedicated service to MAEO. I passionately would advocate for what is right and what is in the best interest of the group. I know what it takes to transform complex issues into practical solutions.

I decided to run for the Board of Director's again because there is still some unfinished business to complete. I would like to continue the leadership role of this group as we progress with proactive approaches.

Armstead Jones cont'd

How long have you been a MAEO member?

I have been an Active member of MAEO for 25 years. Years ago I served as Vice President of the association.

What is your vision and number one priority for MAEO?

My vision is that the board and members would have more cohesiveness and inclusiveness within the membership. My priority is to continue to work intensely on pay increases for the MAEO members.

How do you feel you can improve MAEO and make it more relevant?

I believe that this is a group effort that starts with each member of the board. To make the organization more relevant there has to be more open mindedness and respect for ideas of each other.

Please name 1 or 2 items you would like to accomplish during your 2-year term.

As the present chairperson of the Educational and Grant Committee I would like to bring conferences and workshops to Maryland.

Jayne Lister (Running for Board)



County: Queen Anne's

What made you decide to run for office? If you are an incumbent, what made you decide to run, again?

Time for a change. I would like to see more lines of communication with the MAEO Board and the members.

How long have you been a MAEO member?

In Election for 8 [years]; 7 years MAEO

What is your vision and number one priority for MAEO?

Encourage more MAEO members to make suggestions, and give them an opportunity to be heard.

How do you feel you can improve MAEO and make it more relevant?

I want to see more opportunity to members. Utilize our conferences and Education Committee to bring more perspective in speakers. There are a lot of speakers that are indirectly in our field and they could relay new learning techniques for a new visual path to members.

Please name 1 or 2 items you would like to accomplish during your 2-year term.

More communication and be sure members are being heard.

Kimberly Phillips (Running for Board)



County: Howard

What made you decide to run for office? If you are an incumbent, what made you decide to run again?

Having been a part of this organization for so many years, I look forward to representing all of the members.

How long have you been a MAEO member?

Since 2002

What is your vision and number one priority for MAEO?

Providing support to the members, bringing back unity to the organization.

How do you feel you can improve MAEO and make it more relevant?

By involving the members more, and listening to all concerns and contributions from all members.

Please name 1 or 2 items you would like to accomplish during your 2-year term.

Securing raises for all, an idea that has been discussed for many years. I will strive to see that our member's hard work is recognized financially.

I will work hard to make MAEO relevant to all.

Joshua Ramos (Running for Board)



County: Anne Arundel

What made you decide to run for office? If you are an incumbent, what made you decide to run, again?

I decided to run for office because I am passionate about elections. I have worked over 33 years for the Board of Elections and I believe that MAEO is a great platform. As a Board Member I would represent and be the voice of my colleagues.

Joshua Ramos cont'd

How long have you been a MAEO member?

I've been a MAEO member for over 25years.

What is your vision and number one priority for MAEO?

My vision for MAEO is to advocate for causes to help our election community. Embracing and building upon our differences. My number one priority will be the continuation of the Personnel Committee, to include focusing on the reclassification and promotions for all LBE employees.

How do you feel you can improve MAEO and make it more relevant?

I am an adaptable communicator who thinks quickly on his feet.

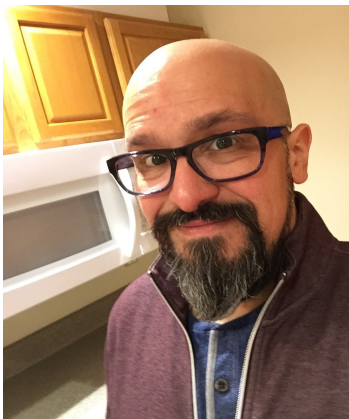
As a communicator I pride myself on being able to both listen and empathize with my audience. Knowing your audience and its needs is key to success in any leadership role. If you don't understand where your audience is coming from, you cannot possibly know where you are going to take them.

Through more interaction I want bring a sense of cohesiveness between MAEO Members and the State Board of Elections to help achieve common goals.

Please name 1 or 2 items you would like to accomplish during your 2-year term.

Once again, my number one priority will be the continuation of the Personnel Committee, to include focusing on the reclassification and promotions for all LBE employees. I would also like to create a Grievance Board for members who feel they are not getting the result they need from their local board of elections. Success is not about one person achieving, it's about helping others achieve greatness.

Marc Welch (Running for Board)



County: Frederick

What made you decide to run for office? If you are an incumbent, what made you decide to run again?

It's vital that the smaller, especially, western counties to be well represented in the organization. There are some things, such as staffing levels, etc. which may be unique to the smaller counties. It will be valuable to the MAEO board to have this perspective.

Marc Welch cont'd

How long have you been a MAEO member?

2 years, since joining the Frederick County Board of Elections staff in June of 2016.

What is your vision and number one priority for MAEO?

MAEO can help communication between LBEs, and members through better web, and social media content. Not only will this improve communication between LBEs, but also with voters.

How do you feel you can improve MAEO and make it more relevant?

MAEO has a platform to help members develop more on-going educational opportunities. Developing workshops throughout the year, will help professional development, and provide an opportunity to share best-practices.

Please name 1 or 2 items you would like to accomplish during your 2-year term.

Help improve MAEO's web, and social media presence. This will let members to communicate with each other more efficiently.

Gilberto Zelaya (Running for Board)



County: Montgomery

What made you decide to run for office? If you are an incumbent, what made you decide to run again?

As a newly elected board member of MAEO, I feel one term was not enough time to establish a dialogue with the membership. Through observation and dialogue, I now understand why LBE's struggle with securing funding or resources for outreach and empowerment. I commit myself to spearhead the creation of a MAEO Voter Outreach & Empowerment Committee.

How long have you been a MAEO member?

Since 2004.

What is your vision and number one priority for MAEO?

Strengthening ties between MAEO, SBE and LBE's while cultivating opportunities to educate Maryland's voters, youth and families while emphasizing the importance of preserving participatory democracy.

Gilbert Zelaya cont'd

How do you feel you can improve MAEO and make it more relevant?

I desire to strengthen MAEO by challenging the membership to identify and share best practices that can be replicated across Maryland and not isolated to a single LBE. "One State, many voices, MAEO!"

Please name 1 or 2 items you would like to accomplish during your 2-year term.

Expand MAEO membership knowledge and understanding of the ever changing demographic landscape and needs of Maryland voters and surrounding Counties.

Strengthen community outreach and empowerment by increasing voter knowledge related to civic participation via MAEO Outreach & Empowerment Committee.

