

SENATE BILL 461

G1

9lr2053
CF HB 79

By: **Senator Waldstreicher**

Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2019

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Election Law – Early Voting Centers – Establishment and Hours**

3 FOR the purpose of increasing the number of early voting centers that certain counties are
4 required to establish; altering the hours that early voting centers are required to be
5 open during gubernatorial general elections; requiring that the location of early
6 voting centers be designated in a certain manner in certain counties; and generally
7 relating to early voting centers.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

9 Article – Election Law

10 Section 10–301.1

11 Annotated Code of Maryland

12 (2017 Replacement Volume and 2018 Supplement)

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
14 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

15 **Article – Election Law**

16 10–301.1.

17 (a) Except as provided under Title 9, Subtitle 3 of this article, during any
18 regularly scheduled primary or general election a voter may vote:

19 (1) in the voter’s assigned precinct on election day; or

20 (2) at an early voting center in the voter’s county of residence on any early
21 voting day in accordance with this section.

22 (b) (1) Each county shall have at least one early voting center established in
23 the county as prescribed in this subsection.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (2) A county with fewer than [125,000] **100,000** registered voters shall
2 have one early voting center established in the county.

3 (3) A county with [more than 125,000] **AT LEAST 100,000** registered
4 voters but fewer than 200,000 registered voters shall have three early voting centers
5 established in the county.

6 (4) A county with [more than] **AT LEAST 200,000** registered voters but
7 fewer than 300,000 registered voters shall have [four] **FIVE** early voting centers established
8 in the county.

9 (5) A county with [more than] **AT LEAST 300,000** registered voters but
10 fewer than [450,000] **400,000** registered voters shall have seven early voting centers
11 established in the county.

12 (6) A county with [more than 450,000] **AT LEAST 400,000 REGISTERED**
13 **VOTERS BUT FEWER THAN 500,000** registered voters shall have [eleven] **NINE** early
14 voting centers.

15 **(7) A COUNTY WITH AT LEAST 500,000 REGISTERED VOTERS BUT**
16 **FEWER THAN 600,000 REGISTERED VOTERS SHALL HAVE ELEVEN EARLY VOTING**
17 **CENTERS.**

18 **(8) A COUNTY WITH AT LEAST 600,000 REGISTERED VOTERS SHALL**
19 **HAVE THIRTEEN EARLY VOTING CENTERS.**

20 **[(7)] (9)** In addition to the early voting centers required in this subsection,
21 each county with fewer than 200,000 registered voters may establish one additional early
22 voting center if the State Board, in collaboration with the local board, and the governing
23 body of the county agree to establish an additional early voting center.

24 (c) No later than 6 months before a primary election, the State Board, in
25 collaboration with the local board in each county, shall designate each early voting center
26 in that county.

27 **(D) TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, IN A COUNTY WITH MORE THAN ONE EARLY**
28 **VOTING CENTER, THE STATE BOARD, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE LOCAL BOARD**
29 **IN THAT COUNTY, SHALL DESIGNATE THE LOCATION OF EACH EARLY VOTING**
30 **CENTER TO MAXIMIZE GEOGRAPHIC DISPERSAL AND ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE**
31 **REGISTERED VOTERS OF THAT COUNTY.**

32 **[(d)] (E)** Each early voting center shall be open for voting as follows:

33 (1) beginning the second Thursday before a primary or general election

1 through the Thursday before the election; and

2 (2) during the following hours:

3 (i) in a **[presidential]** general election, during the hours between 8
4 a.m. and 8 p.m. each early voting day; and

5 (ii) in all other elections, during the hours between 10 a.m. and 8
6 p.m. each early voting day.

7 **[(e)] (F)** Each early voting center shall satisfy the requirements of § 10–101 of
8 this title.

9 **[(f)] (G)** Beginning 30 days prior to each early voting period the State Board and
10 each local board shall undertake steps to inform the public about early voting and the
11 location of early voting centers in each county, including:

12 (1) a series of public service media announcements;

13 (2) mailings to all registered voters in each county; and

14 (3) other measures as appropriate.

15 **[(g)] (H)** Except as expressly provided in this section, any provision of this article
16 that applies to voting on election day also applies to early voting.

17 **[(h)] (I)** The State Board shall adopt regulations and guidelines in accordance
18 with the requirements of this section for the conduct of early voting.

19 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
20 October 1, 2019.