

Lubna Azmi
Testimony for HB0156
Ways and Means Committee, Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021
Student and Military Voter Empowerment Act

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Hello, my name is Lubna Azmi and I reside in Baltimore City. I am a sophomore at Johns Hopkins University. I would first like to thank Delegate Luedtke and Senator Elfreth for the proposal of the Student and Military Voter Empowerment Act.

Strengthening our democracy should not have to be a partisan issue. Bills like the VEA should be passed unquestionably each time they are presented. We have serious issues of disenfranchisement in this country, especially in our state. Although there are many young people that are actively engaged in politics, whether they cast their vote each election or they keep up with political news, many more do not. I can speak to personal experience. Many of my friends, all college aged, do not feel that their voices are heard.

Like my friend Sami. The voting process is so tedious, he has never even registered to vote due to the barriers that come in the way. He is always working, and doesn't get the chance to think much of things outside of his and his family's survival.

Or my friend Daniella, who missed her absentee ballot deadline and wasn't able to go in person this past election due how far the polling place was.

Or my friend CJ who couldn't navigate his voter registration due to lack of knowledge because his family is undocumented. He never learned how to vote at home, and he never learned in school.

Every time we refuse to make voting easier, we are continuing to allow the suppression of somebody's voice.

It is due to the incredible work of these officials and of organizers like many here today including Black Girls Vote, Maryland PIRG, Common Cause, and the League of Women Voters. We need to honor their work, and honor the constituents of this state. I am in strong favor of the passing of the VEA, and I hope all of you here today help to strengthen our democracy by voting in favor of it as well. Thank you.