

February 21, 2023

**Testimony on HB 616
Election Law - Early Voting - Number of Days
Ways and Means**

Position: Unfavorable

Common Cause Maryland is in opposition to HB 616, which would reduce the number of early voting days in Maryland by opening early vote centers on the second Sunday, rather than the second Thursday, before a primary or general election.

Democracy works best when all eligible persons are able to participate and make their voices heard. Early voting allows more opportunities to get to the polls – easing or eliminating problems for those who cannot make it to vote on Election Day.

Early voting has proven tremendously popular in Maryland. During the 2020 General Election, we broke the state record for single-day turnout surpassing previous unofficial single-day early voting record set in the 2016 general election and we expect the program to grow more popular as early vote center locations increase and become more accessible.

As the state strives to engage more voters in our elections, it is important that we continue to provide opportunities for voters to cast their ballots at a time and on a schedule that works with busy lives, long work hours, and other barriers to voting on Election Day. For these reasons, we urge an unfavorable report from the committee.