

TERRI L. HILL, M.D.
Legislative District 12A
Howard County



Annapolis Office
The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 404
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3378 · 301-858-3378
800-492-7122 Ext. 3378
Fax 410-841-3197 · 301-858-3197
Terri.Hill@house.state.md.us

Health and Government Operations
Committee

Subcommittees

Government Operations
and Health Facilities

Public Health and
Minority Health Disparities

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

District Office
410-884-4380
Fax 410-884-5481

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Support: HB95
Election Judges - Training and Signs - Accommodations for Voters in Need of Assistance

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice-chair Washington, and Committee Members,

HB95

- Requires that training for election judges include oral instruction and written material on a range of methods that may be used to assist or accommodate elderly and disabled voters in voting;
- Ensures that judges assigned to a voting site are made aware of the accommodations available at that site;
- Requires that the specific methods of accommodation available to a voter in need of assistance at each voting site be prominently displayed so that voters, particularly those in need of assistance, can be aware of the accommodation options.

This body, and this committee in particular, has done important work over the years in ensuring the right of eligible voters to exercise the franchise and this bill is one small but important part of completing that work. While the state and local election boards do provide accommodations for disabled, elderly, and others voters who need it, but they vary from site to site. Voters are not always clear as to what kind of assistance is possible and are sometimes too embarrassed or discouraged to ask.

Worse, there have been times when a well-meaning poll worker has failed to offer an available accommodation because they either did not know about it or did not think about it in the moment. Although these occasions are likely rare, they need not occur at all, which is what HB0095 aims to do.

It is not prescriptive as to the type of accommodations that should be offered. The local boards retain the discretion to make those determinations as appropriate for specific poll locations and building layouts. It simply requires that that information be available to the voter without their having to ask, and that the workers be aware of them too.

While the goal is to increase awareness of and access to available accommodations, it is unlikely that every possible accommodation can be anticipated or taught. In acknowledgment of this, and of concerns about signage requirements being overly restrictive, I have offered an amendment that I ask the subcommittee to consider.

I urge a favorable report on **HB95** as amended.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terri L. Hill".