



01/25/2024

**Testimony on HB 142**  
**Election Law – Polling Places – Establishing Voter Identity (Voter Privacy Act of 2024)**  
**Ways and Means**

**Position:** Unfavorable

Common Cause Maryland and the League of Conservation Voters Maryland both oppose HB 142, which would require proof of identity to vote and give voter’s the option of completing a provisional ballot if they are unable to provide proof of identity, as well as prohibiting a person from knowingly and willfully voting or attempting to vote under a false form of identification.

Voting is celebrated as the most fundamental form of civic participation in a democracy, a means by which all voices are counted on an equal basis. Restrictive identification requirements like a photo ID undermine this goal because it prevents eligible voters from participating, imposes enormous and unjustified costs on states, and does not achieve the goals they claim to work towards.

Studies show that those without ID are disproportionately likely to be Black, Latino, low-income voters, young adults, senior citizens, people with disabilities, and/or be part of the LGBTQ+ community. For many of these eligible people, it is no “simple” matter to obtain the necessary ID — the hurdles involved can make doing so difficult, and in some cases, impossible. For example, presenting a certified copy of one’s birth certificate is a prerequisite to obtaining identification from a DMV. However, many people do not have their birth certificate in an easily accessible place, have lost it, or never had one in the first place. Given that a driver’s license is the most typical form of ID required to vote, it stands to reason that citizens without identification do not necessarily have an easy way to physically get to the offices they need to go to in order to get that ID. Even if travel can be arranged, many DMVs provide limited service hours and often have extended wait times, creating a third barrier to obtaining identification.

The risk of disenfranchisement is far greater than the evidence of voter fraud in Maryland. Millions of citizens residing in states with these restrictive laws do not currently possess the requisite photo ID needed to vote. And while there is anecdotal evidence of voter fraud, there has never been proof that fraud is occurring on a scale that would necessitate this type of measure – or outweigh its risks.

HB 142 would roll back basic protections that allow all registered voters to engage in our democratic process.

We urge an unfavorable report.