



**Testimony before the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
February 4, 2026**

House Bill 263 Election Law - Early Voting Centers - Bus Stops

SUPPORT

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD) Committee on Aging, we would like to express our support for House Bill 263 Election Law - Early Voting Centers - Bus Stops.

As social workers who serve older adults, we are in favor of this bill because it would provide an alternative for older adults to get to their polling place safely during the early voting period. House Bill 263 would require buses operating on a certain fixed local route to allow passengers to embark and disembark at the entrance of early voting centers located within a certain distance of the route. This would apply to transportation funded and operated by a county or municipal corporation.

House Bill 263 would also require State and Local Boards of Elections to inform the public about early voting and the location of early voting centers, which would include a series of public service media announcements, mailings to all registered voters and other measures as appropriate.

Older adults historically turn out to vote in greater numbers than any other age group. Early voting has become popular with older adults as it allows for flexibility in casting their vote. Mail-in voting has also expanded voting options, but older adults often feel strongly about voting in person if they are able.

Transportation to polling places can be a problem for older adults who no longer drive. Using a local bus is one way many older adults already get to appointments and shopping. Passing House Bill 263 would allow older adults to embark and disembark at the door of the early voting center or as close as safely possible.

Many communities work hard to be sure everyone who plans on voting can get to their polling places. That generally works well on election day. Early voting takes place on many more days, which makes those transportation options less available. House Bill 263 will give older adults and those who rely on public transportation, a safe entry to their voting site and will continue to promote early voting as a voting option.

We ask for your favorable report on House Bill 263.

Respectfully,

Karessa Proctor, BSW, MSW
Executive Director, NASW-MD