

February 4, 2026

Testimony on HB 263
Election Law – Early Voting Centers – Bus Stops
Government, Labor, and Elections

Petition: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland is in favor of HB 263, which would require county buses with a route located within one-half mile of an Early Voting Center entrance to allow passengers to embark and disembark there.

Early voting was established to drive participation and make voting more convenient. While the program has been a continual success and we've seen hundreds of thousands of Marylanders choose to vote early since it was established, the lack of access to reliable transportation remains a strong barrier to voting. This legislation would provide individuals who use public transit easy access to early voting sites, helping to alleviate the barrier of transportation for many voters.

We appreciate the State Board of Elections taking this step to ensure that Early Voting Centers are as accessible as possible to all voters. We encourage SBE to advertise this program so the public knows additional transportation support will be available, including advertisements inside the buses themselves and in all other places promotional materials are shared. In the future, we also hope the legislature will consider making bus trips to Early Vote Centers free of cost to the voter.

We should be doing everything we can to remove barriers to exercising the right to vote. HB 263 would help to do that by ensuring all voters are provided with better access to early voting sites. For these reasons, we request a favorable report on HB 263.