

Chapter 288

(House Bill 1008)

AN ACT concerning

Election Law – Early Voting Centers

FOR the purpose of increasing the number of early voting centers that certain counties are required to establish; providing that certain counties may establish one additional early voting center under certain circumstances; providing for a delayed effective date; and generally relating to early voting centers.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Election Law

Section 10–301.1

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2010 Replacement Volume and 2015 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Election Law

10–301.1.

(a) Except as provided under Title 9, Subtitle 3 of this article, during any regularly scheduled primary or general election a voter may vote:

(1) in the voter’s assigned precinct on election day; or

(2) at an early voting center in the voter’s county of residence on any early voting day in accordance with this section.

(b) (1) Each county shall have at least one early voting center established in the county as prescribed in this subsection.

(2) A county with fewer than 125,000 registered voters shall have one early voting center established in the county.

(3) A county with more than 125,000 registered voters but fewer than ~~300,000~~ **200,000** registered voters shall have ~~three~~ **FOUR** early voting centers established in the county.

(4) A COUNTY WITH MORE THAN 200,000 REGISTERED VOTERS BUT FEWER THAN 300,000 REGISTERED VOTERS SHALL HAVE FOUR EARLY VOTING CENTERS ESTABLISHED IN THE COUNTY.

~~(4)~~ **(5)** A county with more than 300,000 registered voters but fewer than 450,000 registered voters shall have [five] SEVEN early voting centers established in the county.

~~(5)~~ **(6)** A county with more than 450,000 registered voters shall have [eight] ELEVEN early voting centers.

~~(6)~~ **(7)** In addition to the early voting centers required in this subsection, each county **WITH FEWER THAN ~~125,000~~ 200,000 REGISTERED VOTERS** may establish one additional early voting center if the State Board, in collaboration with the local board, and the governing body of the county agree to establish an additional early voting center.

(c) No later than 6 months before a primary election, the State Board, in collaboration with the local board in each county, shall designate each early voting center in that county.

(d) Each early voting center shall be open for voting as follows:

(1) beginning the second Thursday before a primary or general election through the Thursday before the election; and

(2) during the following hours:

(i) in a presidential general election, during the hours between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. each early voting day; and

(ii) in all other elections, during the hours between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. each early voting day.

(e) Each early voting center shall satisfy the requirements of § 10–101 of this title.

(f) Beginning 30 days prior to each early voting period the State Board and each local board shall undertake steps to inform the public about early voting and the location of early voting centers in each county, including:

(1) a series of public service media announcements;

(2) mailings to all registered voters in each county; and

(3) other measures as appropriate.

(g) Except as expressly provided in this section, any provision of this article that applies to voting on election day also applies to early voting.

(h) The State Board shall adopt regulations and guidelines in accordance with the requirements of this section for the conduct of early voting.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect January 1, 2017.

Approved by the Governor, April 26, 2016.