

Chapter 441

(House Bill 353)

AN ACT concerning

**Election Law – Change in Administrative Policy Affecting Voting Rights –
Notice**

FOR the purpose of requiring the State Board of Elections or a local board of elections to provide certain public notice in advance of a meeting at which a change in an administrative policy affecting voting rights will be considered; requiring the State Board of Elections or a local board of elections that adopts a change in an administrative policy affecting voting rights to provide certain public notice of the change; providing for the form, content, and timing of the public notice; ~~providing that an individual’s right to vote may not be denied or abridged because the individual failed to comply with a change in an administrative policy affecting voting rights if the State Board or local board did not provide public notice of the change; clarifying that existing prohibitions on voter fraud and voter suppression apply to a person acting under color of law;~~ defining a certain term; and generally relating to notice of changes in administrative policies affecting voting rights.

BY adding to

Article – Election Law
Section 1–101(b–2) and 1–305
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2010 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

~~BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,~~

~~Article – Election Law
Section 16–201
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2010 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)~~

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

Article – Election Law

1–101.

(B–2) “ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AFFECTING VOTING RIGHTS” MEANS ANY ACTION RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION, PROVISIONAL VOTING, ABSENTEE VOTING, OR THE LOCATION OF A POLLING PLACE OR EARLY VOTING CENTER.

1–305.

(A) THE STATE BOARD OR A LOCAL BOARD MAY NOT CONSIDER A CHANGE IN AN ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AFFECTING VOTING RIGHTS AT A MEETING UNLESS THE BOARD HAS POSTED A PROMINENT PUBLIC NOTICE ON ITS WEB SITE AT LEAST 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING STATING THAT THE BOARD WILL CONSIDER AN ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AFFECTING VOTING RIGHTS AT THE MEETING.

(B) IF THE STATE BOARD OR A LOCAL BOARD ADOPTS A CHANGE IN AN ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AFFECTING VOTING RIGHTS, THE STATE BOARD AND, IF APPLICABLE, THE LOCAL BOARD THAT ADOPTED THE CHANGE SHALL PROVIDE REASONABLE PUBLIC NOTICE OF THE CHANGE AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION.

(C) THE PUBLIC NOTICE SHALL:

(1) BE IN A REASONABLY CONVENIENT AND ACCESSIBLE FORMAT;

(2) BE PROMINENTLY POSTED ON THE WEB SITE OF THE:

(I) STATE BOARD; AND

(II) LOCAL BOARD THAT ADOPTED THE CHANGE, IF APPLICABLE;

(3) INCLUDE A CONCISE DESCRIPTION OF THE CHANGE, INCLUDING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE NEW ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AFFECTING VOTING RIGHTS AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AFFECTING VOTING RIGHTS THAT WAS PREVIOUSLY IN EFFECT; AND

(4) BE PROVIDED WITHIN 48 HOURS OF THE ADOPTION OF THE CHANGE.

~~(D) THE RIGHT TO VOTE OF AN INDIVIDUAL MAY NOT BE DENIED OR ABRIDGED BECAUSE THE INDIVIDUAL FAILS TO COMPLY WITH A CHANGE IN AN ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AFFECTING VOTING RIGHTS IF THE STATE BOARD AND, IF APPLICABLE, THE LOCAL BOARD THAT ADOPTED THE CHANGE DID NOT PROVIDE THE PUBLIC NOTICES REQUIRED UNDER THIS SECTION.~~

~~16-201~~

~~(a) A person, INCLUDING A PERSON ACTING UNDER COLOR OF LAW, may not willfully and knowingly:~~

~~(1) (i) impersonate another person in order to vote or attempt to vote;~~
or

~~(ii) vote or attempt to vote under a false name;~~

~~(2) vote more than once for a candidate for the same office or for the same ballot question;~~

~~(3) vote or attempt to vote more than once in the same election, or vote in more than one election district or precinct;~~

~~(4) vote in an election district or precinct without the legal authority to vote in that election district or precinct;~~

~~(5) influence or attempt to influence a voter's voting decision through the use of force, threat, menace, intimidation, bribery, reward, or offer of reward;~~

~~(6) influence or attempt to influence a voter's decision whether to go to the polls to cast a vote through the use of force, fraud, threat, menace, intimidation, bribery, reward, or offer of reward; or~~

~~(7) engage in conduct that results or has the intent to result in the denial or abridgement of the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race, color, or disability.~~

~~(b) Except as provided in § 16-1002 of this title, a person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to a fine of not more than \$5,000 or imprisonment for not more than 5 years or both.~~

~~(c) A person who violates this section is subject to § 5-106(b) of the Courts Article.~~

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

Approved by the Governor, May 4, 2017.