

# SENATE BILL 557

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By: **Senator Augustine**

Introduced and read first time: January 25, 2024

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Election Law – Polling Place Procedures – Individual Assisting a Voter**

3 FOR the purpose of prohibiting an individual assisting a voter in marking or preparing the  
4 ballot at a polling place from assisting more than a certain number of unrelated  
5 voters during an election or from receiving compensation for assisting a voter in  
6 marking or preparing the ballot; and generally relating to voter assistance at polling  
7 places.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

9 Article – Election Law

10 Section 10–310(c)

11 Annotated Code of Maryland

12 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

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

15 **Article – Election Law**

16 10–310.

17 (c) (1) Before a voter enters a voting booth, at the request of the voter, an  
18 election judge shall:

19 (i) instruct the voter about the operation of the voting system; and

20 (ii) allow the voter an opportunity to operate a model voting device,  
21 if appropriate to the voting system in use.

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1                   (2)   (i)    1.    After a voter enters the voting booth, at the request of the  
2 voter, two election judges representing different political parties shall instruct the voter on  
3 the operation of the voting device.

4                                   2.    An election judge may not suggest in any way how the  
5 voter should vote for a particular ticket, candidate, or position on a question.

6                                   3.    After instructing the voter, the election judges shall exit  
7 the voting booth and allow the voter to vote privately.

8                                   (ii) A voter may take into the polling place any written or printed  
9 material to assist the voter in marking or preparing the ballot.

10                   (3)   (i)    Except as provided in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, a voter  
11 who requires assistance in marking or preparing the ballot because of a physical disability  
12 or an inability to read the English language may choose any individual to assist the voter.

13                                   (ii) A voter may not choose the voter's employer or agent of that  
14 employer or an officer or agent of the voter's union to assist the voter in marking the ballot.

15                   (4)    If the voter requires the assistance of another in voting but declines to  
16 select an individual to assist, an election judge, in the presence of another election judge  
17 that represents another political party, shall assist the voter in the manner prescribed by  
18 the voter.

19                   (5)    An individual assisting a voter may not:

20                                   (I)    suggest in any way how the voter should vote for a particular  
21 ticket, candidate, or position on a question;

22                                   (II)   **ASSIST MORE THAN THREE VOTERS WHO ARE UNRELATED**  
23 **TO THE INDIVIDUAL IN MARKING OR PREPARING A BALLOT; OR**

24                                   (III) **RECEIVE COMPENSATION FOR ASSISTING A VOTER IN**  
25 **MARKING OR PREPARING THE BALLOT.**

26                   (6)    If a voter requires assistance under paragraph (4) or (5) of this  
27 subsection, the election judge shall record, on a form prescribed by the State Board, the  
28 name of the voter who required assistance and the name of the individual providing  
29 assistance to the voter.

30                   (7)    Except as provided in paragraph (3) or (4) of this subsection, an  
31 individual over the age of 17 years may not accompany a voter into a voting booth.

32                   SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
33 January 1, 2025.