

# HOUSE BILL 1001

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CF SB 670

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By: **Delegate D. Jones**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2026

Assigned to: Government, Labor, and Elections

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Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 3, 2026

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## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Election Law – ~~Local Board of Elections Employees~~ Authority at Polling**  
3 **Places – Revisions**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring a police officer who is on duty at a polling place to obey the  
5 authority of ~~a local board of elections employee~~ a local election director; providing  
6 that ~~local board employees, while serving, in~~ in a polling place, have a local election  
7 director has the authority to keep the peace and order the arrest of certain persons;  
8 ~~authorizing~~ requiring a local board employees election director, while serving in a  
9 polling place, to protect certain rights of, certain challengers and watchers;  
10 authorizing a local election director, while serving in a polling place, to deny  
11 admission of, and eject certain challengers and watchers from a polling place under  
12 certain circumstances; altering the persons that may designate a registered voter as  
13 an accredited challenger or watcher at each polling place; authorizing certain  
14 persons to designate accredited challengers or watchers at early voting centers; and  
15 generally relating to the authority of ~~local board employees~~ individuals at polling  
16 places and early voting centers.

17 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
18 Article – Election Law  
19 Section 10-304 and ~~10-311(d) and (e)~~ 10-311  
20 Annotated Code of Maryland  
21 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

22 BY adding to  
23 Article – Election Law

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 Section 10–307.1  
 2 Annotated Code of Maryland  
 3 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

6 **Article – Election Law**

7 10–304.

8 (a) (1) A police officer who is on duty at a polling place shall obey the order of  
 9 an election judge for that polling place ~~OR A LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEE~~ OR A LOCAL  
 10 ELECTION DIRECTOR.

11 (2) A police officer making an arrest under an order of an election judge ~~OR~~  
 12 ~~A LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEE OR A LOCAL ELECTION DIRECTOR~~ is fully protected in so  
 13 doing as if the police officer received a valid warrant to make the arrest.

14 (b) A police officer who is on duty at a polling place shall protect a challenger or  
 15 watcher in the discharge of the duties of the challenger or watcher.

16 **10–307.1.**

17 (A) ~~WHILE SERVING IN~~ IN A POLLING PLACE, ~~A LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEE~~ A  
 18 LOCAL ELECTION DIRECTOR HAS THE AUTHORITY TO:

19 (1) KEEP THE PEACE; AND

20 (2) ORDER THE ARREST OF ANY PERSON WHO:

21 (I) BREACHES THE PEACE;

22 (II) BREACHES ANY PROVISION OF THIS ARTICLE; OR

23 (III) INTERFERES WITH THE WORK OF THE ELECTION JUDGES IN  
 24 CONDUCTING THE ELECTION AND CARRYING OUT THEIR ASSIGNED TASKS.

25 (B) (1) ~~WHILE SERVING IN~~ WHILE SERVING IN A POLLING PLACE, ~~A LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEE~~  
 26 ELECTION DIRECTOR ~~MAY~~ SHALL PROTECT A CHALLENGER OR WATCHER IN THE  
 27 EXERCISE OF THE RIGHTS OF A CHALLENGER OR WATCHER AS PROVIDED IN §  
 28 **10–311** OF THIS SUBTITLE.

29 (2) (I) A LOCAL ~~BOARD EMPLOYEE~~ ELECTION DIRECTOR IS NOT  
 30 REQUIRED TO ADMIT A CHALLENGER OR WATCHER TO A POLLING PLACE BEFORE

1 THE POLLS OPEN IF THE CHALLENGER OR WATCHER WAS NOT PRESENT AT THE  
2 POLLING PLACE AT LEAST 30 MINUTES BEFORE ITS OPENING.

3 (II) A LOCAL ~~BOARD EMPLOYEE~~ ELECTION DIRECTOR MAY  
4 REQUIRE CHALLENGERS AND WATCHERS TO LEAVE A POLLING PLACE BEFORE IT  
5 OPENS IF THE LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEE HAS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE  
6 PRESENCE OF THE CHALLENGERS AND WATCHERS WILL PREVENT THE TIMELY  
7 OPENING OF THE POLLING PLACE.

8 (C) A LOCAL ~~BOARD EMPLOYEE~~ ELECTION DIRECTOR MAY EXERCISE THE  
9 AUTHORITY UNDER SUBSECTIONS (A) AND (B) OF THIS SECTION INDEPENDENT OF  
10 AN ELECTION JUDGE ASSIGNED TO THE POLLING PLACE.

11 10-311.

12 (a) (1) The following persons [or entities] have the right to designate a  
13 registered voter as [a] AN ACCREDITED challenger or a watcher at each POLLING place  
14 [of registration and election] OR EARLY VOTING CENTER:

15 (i) the State Board for any [polling place] LOCATION in the State;

16 (ii) a local board for any [polling place located] LOCATION in the  
17 county of the local board;

18 (iii) a candidate FOR ANY LOCATION WHERE THE CANDIDATE IS  
19 INCLUDED ON THE BALLOT;

20 (iv) a political party; [and]

21 (v) [any other group of voters supporting or opposing a candidate,  
22 principle, or proposition on the ballot] A POLITICAL COMMITTEE; AND

23 (VI) A PERSON REQUIRED TO FILE REPORTS UNDER § 13-306 OR  
24 § 13-307 OF THIS ARTICLE.

25 (2) A person who appoints [a] AN ACCREDITED challenger or watcher may  
26 remove the challenger or watcher at any time.

27 (b) Except as provided in § 10-303(d)(2) of this subtitle and subsection (d) of this  
28 section, [a] AN ACCREDITED challenger or watcher has the right to:

29 (1) enter the polling place OR EARLY VOTING CENTER one-half hour  
30 before the polls open;

1           (2) enter or be present at the polling place OR EARLY VOTING CENTER at  
2 any time when the polls are open;

3           (3) remain in the polling place OR EARLY VOTING CENTER until the  
4 completion of all tasks associated with the close of the polls under § 10–314 of this subtitle  
5 and the election judges leave the polling place OR EARLY VOTING CENTER;

6           (4) maintain a list of registered voters who have voted, or individuals who  
7 have cast provisional ballots, and take the list outside of the polling place OR EARLY  
8 VOTING CENTER; and

9           (5) enter and leave a polling place OR EARLY VOTING CENTER for the  
10 purpose of taking outside of the polling place OR EARLY VOTING CENTER information that  
11 identifies registered voters who have cast ballots or individuals who have cast provisional  
12 ballots.

13           (c) (1) (i) A certificate signed by [any party or candidate] A DESIGNATING  
14 PERSON shall be sufficient evidence of the right of [a] AN ACCREDITED challenger or  
15 watcher to be present in the voting room.

16                           (ii) The State Board shall prescribe a form that shall be supplied to  
17 the ACCREDITED challenger or watcher by the DESIGNATING person [or entity  
18 designating the challenger or watcher].

19   (III) A DESIGNATING PERSON SHALL SUBMIT A COPY OF THE  
20 CERTIFICATE OF AN ACCREDITED CHALLENGER OR WATCHER TO THE APPROPRIATE  
21 LOCAL BOARD BEFORE THE ACCREDITED CHALLENGER OR WATCHER MAY ENTER  
22 THE VOTING ROOM.

23           (2) A challenger or watcher shall be positioned near the election judges and  
24 inside the voting room so that the challenger or watcher may see and hear each person as  
25 the person offers to vote.

26           (d) (1) A challenger or watcher may not attempt to:

27                           (i) ascertain how a voter voted or intends to vote;

28                           (ii) converse in the polling place OR EARLY VOTING CENTER with  
29 any voter;

30                           (iii) assist any voter in voting; or

31                           (iv) physically handle an original election document OR VOTING  
32 EQUIPMENT.

1 (2) An election judge ~~OR A LOCAL BOARD-EMPLOYEE ELECTION~~  
2 DIRECTOR may eject a challenger or watcher who violates the prohibitions under  
3 paragraph (1) of this subsection.

4 (e) (1) Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3) of this subsection, an  
5 election judge shall [permit] **ALLOW** an individual other than an accredited challenger or  
6 watcher who desires to challenge the right to vote of any other individual to enter the  
7 polling place OR EARLY VOTING CENTER for that purpose.

8 (2) A majority of the election judges ~~OR A LOCAL BOARD-EMPLOYEE~~  
9 ELECTION DIRECTOR may limit the number of nonaccredited challengers and watchers  
10 allowed in the polling place OR EARLY VOTING CENTER at any one time for the purpose  
11 of challenging the right of an individual to vote.

12 (3) A nonaccredited challenger or watcher shall leave the polling place OR  
13 EARLY VOTING CENTER as soon as a majority of the election judges ~~OR A LOCAL BOARD~~  
14 ~~EMPLOYEE ELECTION DIRECTOR~~ decides the right to vote of the individual challenged  
15 by the challenger or watcher.

16 (4) In addition to restrictions provided under this subsection, all  
17 restrictions on the actions of an accredited challenger or watcher provided under this  
18 subtitle apply to a nonaccredited challenger or watcher.

19 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June  
20 1, 2026.

Approved:

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Governor.

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Speaker of the House of Delegates.

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President of the Senate.