

# SENATE BILL 670

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CF HB 1001

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By: **Senator Kagan**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

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Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate 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~~ the State Administrator or the State  
6 Administrator’s designee or a local election director or the local election director’s  
7 designee; providing that ~~local board employees, while serving, in~~ a polling place,  
8 certain persons have the authority to keep the peace and order the arrest of certain  
9 persons; authorizing ~~a local board employees~~ election director, while serving in a  
10 polling place, to protect certain rights of, deny admission of, and eject certain  
11 challengers and watchers from a polling place under certain circumstances; altering  
12 the types of persons that may designate a registered voter as an accredited  
13 challenger or watcher at each polling place; authorizing certain persons to designate  
14 accredited challengers or watchers at early voting centers and canvassing locations;  
15 and generally relating to the authority of local board employees at polling places.

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

21 BY adding to  
22 Article – Election Law  
23 Section 10–307.1

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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 Annotated Code of Maryland  
2 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

5 **Article – Election Law**

6 10–304.

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

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

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

18 **10–307.1.**

19 (A) ~~WHILE SERVING IN~~ IN A POLLING PLACE, A LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEE  
20 THE STATE ADMINISTRATOR OR THE STATE ADMINISTRATOR’S DESIGNEE OR A  
21 LOCAL ELECTION DIRECTOR OR THE LOCAL ELECTION DIRECTOR’S DESIGNEE HAS  
22 THE AUTHORITY TO:

23 (1) KEEP THE PEACE; AND

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

25 (I) BREACHES THE PEACE;

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

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

29 (B) (1) ~~WHILE SERVING IN A POLLING PLACE, A LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEE~~  
30 ELECTION DIRECTOR MAY PROTECT A CHALLENGER OR WATCHER IN THE EXERCISE

1 OF THE RIGHTS OF A CHALLENGER OR WATCHER AS PROVIDED IN § 10-311 OF THIS  
2 SUBTITLE.

3 (2) (I) A LOCAL ~~BOARD EMPLOYEE~~ ELECTION DIRECTOR IS NOT  
4 REQUIRED TO ADMIT A CHALLENGER OR WATCHER TO A POLLING PLACE BEFORE  
5 THE POLLS OPEN IF THE CHALLENGER OR WATCHER WAS NOT PRESENT AT THE  
6 POLLING PLACE AT LEAST 30 MINUTES BEFORE ITS OPENING.

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

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

15 10-311.

16 (a) (1) The following persons [or entities] have the right to designate a  
17 registered voter as [a] AN ACCREDITED challenger or a watcher at each POLLING place  
18 [of registration and election], EARLY VOTING CENTER, AND CANVASSING LOCATION:

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

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

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

24 (iv) a political party; [and]

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

27 (VI) A PERSON REQUIRED TO FILE REPORTS UNDER § 13-306 OR  
28 § 13-307 OF THIS ARTICLE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

17 (c) (1) (i) A certificate signed by [any party or candidate] A DESIGNATING  
18 PERSON shall be sufficient evidence of the right of [a] AN ACCREDITED challenger or  
19 watcher to be present in the voting room OR CANVASSING ROOM.

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

23 (III) A DESIGNATING PERSON SHALL SUBMIT A COPY OF THE  
24 CERTIFICATE OF AN ACCREDITED CHALLENGER OR WATCHER TO THE APPROPRIATE  
25 LOCAL BOARD BEFORE THE ACCREDITED CHALLENGER OR WATCHER MAY ENTER  
26 THE VOTING ROOM OR CANVASSING ROOM.

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

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

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

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

1 (iii) assist any voter in voting; or

2 (iv) physically handle an original election document OR VOTING  
3 EQUIPMENT.

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

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

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

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

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

22 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June  
23 1, 2026.

Approved:

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Governor.

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President of the Senate.

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Speaker of the House of Delegates.