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Testimony in Support SB56

January 28, 2020

Assigned to Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**A Bill entitled Election Law-Petitions and Ballot Questions- Plain Language
Requirement**

Sponsored by Senator Kagan

Written by Mat Rice

Good afternoon Honorable Chairperson and members of the committee, my name is Mat Rice. I am the public policy specialist for People on the Go of Maryland, the statewide self- advocacy organization. We support SB 56 which would allow ballots and petitions to be written in plain language at a 6th grade reading level. The ability to participate in our democratic process is a fundamental right for all citizens of Maryland, this legislation makes that process more inclusive. There are many people with disabilities and without who have significant reading challenges; whatever steps we can take to make this process more open for people with disabilities should be strongly considered. To many citizens take the right to vote for granted so just imagine if you wanted to vote or were interested in signing a petition and you could not understand it, you might see yourself as marginalized; you may not feel like a full citizen. People have to know that participation in our democracy is something we value and not just an idea. For all of these reasons we hope that you will consider granting this legislation a favorable report.

People On The Go supports SB56.

Thank you