

Feb 6, 2020

Testimony on SB 310
Baltimore City- Elections-Early Voting Center
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland supports SB 310 which would increase the number of early voting locations in Baltimore. Specifically, it would require an extra site at Frederick Douglas High school. Common Cause believes voting should be accessible for all voters. Early voting sites help address many barriers to voting including work schedules, the need to avoid long lines on election day, and etc. Adding an additional site in Baltimore will help increase accessibility for more voters.

During the 2018 gubernatorial general election, more people voted than ever before with early voting more than doubling compared to turnout in 2014. Early voting increases participation. That is why we are in favor of the establishment of as many early voting sites as needed for residents of a county or state to feel like they have easy access to early voting.

Last year, 12 out of 15 members of the Baltimore City Council supported a resolution in favor of an additional early voting site in Baltimore, bringing the number of sites to eight. The purpose of the resolution was to address there being only one early voting place in West Baltimore. Also, having an extra site will make it easier for residents to exercise their right to vote.

Early voting was established to drive participation and make voting more convenient. While the program has been a success and has seen a surge in the number of Marylanders voting early, we could get more participation with an equitable placement of early voting sites.

We need to do everything we can to remove barriers to exercising the right to vote. SB 310 would help to do that by ensuring all voters are provided with ample time to vote early during gubernatorial general elections.

We urge a favorable report.