

Dear Sir or Madam,

As man with a disability, a widower of a woman with disabilities, and an activist for people with disabilities, I can speak to the fact that we need a little assistance. That help does not make us dependent; rather, it makes us independent. It lets us live our lives with fewer barriers than we might otherwise face.

One very important – and often challenging – aspect of our lives is voting. All too often disabled people encounter obstacles that can keep us home on election day. Lack of transportation and money, poor weather and other factors affect us more than nondisabled voters.

We often need to use paratransit to take us to our polling place. Because of schedule limitations, that can further hamper the voting experience. When a return ride is scheduled for 3:30, paratransit users need to be ready to go **at 3:30**. This legislation will help here. When disabled voters know they won't have to wait in line for an indeterminate amount of time, they can plan their trip accordingly. They'll be more encouraged to vote, to be a part of the process.

This legislation will also help parents of disabled children, who often need a fairly structured schedule when caring for their kids. Knowing they can get through the line an hour earlier than normal can be the difference between voting and not voting.

I strongly urge you to support HB 0142 and help reduce the turnout gap between voters with and without disabilities. Thank you.

Crosby King, Organizer

Maryland ADAPT